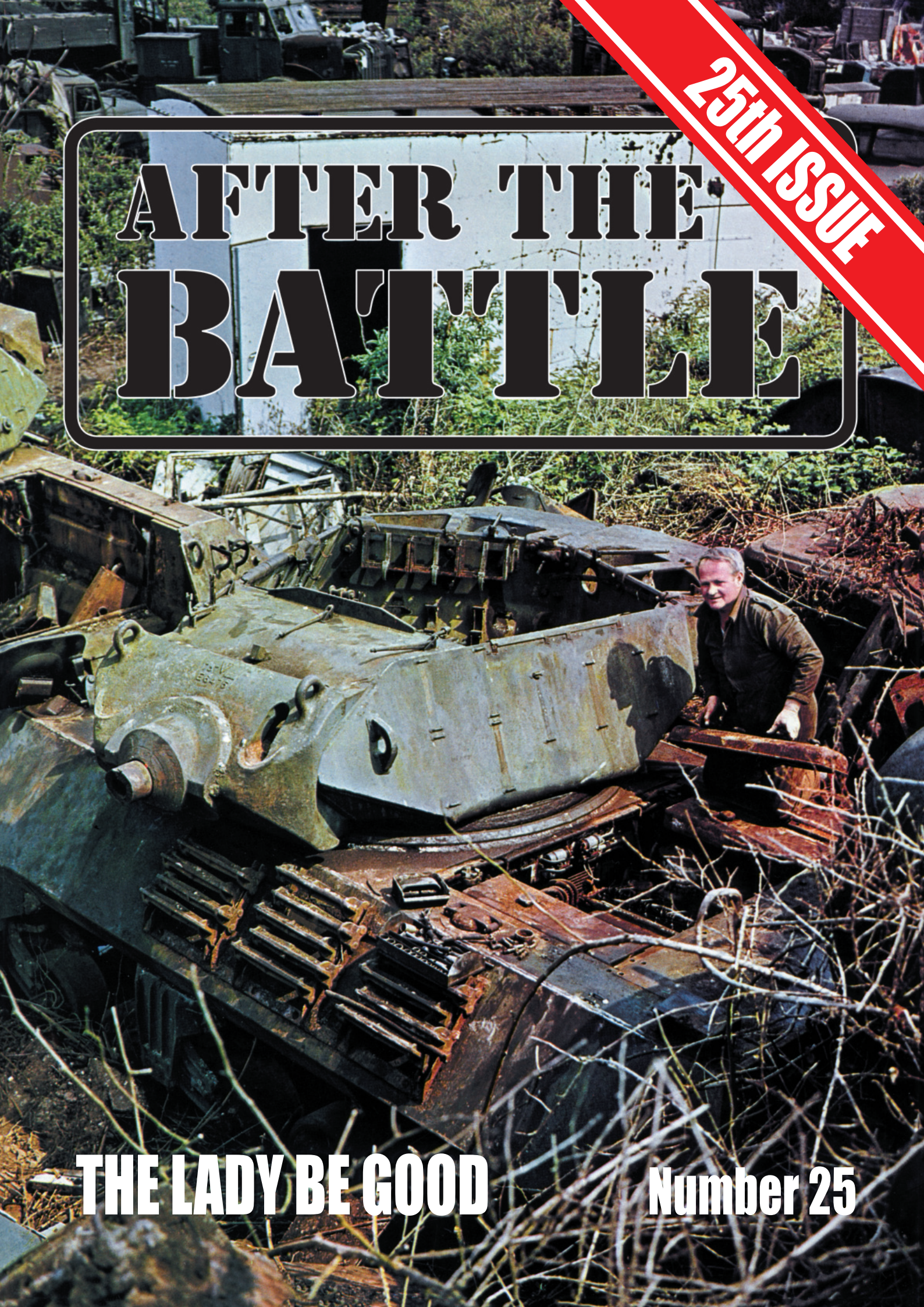

25th ISSUE
AFTER THE
BATTLE
THE LADY BE GOOD
Number 25

AFTER THE BATTLE

NUMBER 25

Edited by Winston G. Ramsey

Published by Battle of Britain Prints International Ltd., 3 New Plaistow Road, Stratford, London E15 3JA, England Telephone: 01-534 8833

Printed in Great Britain by Plaistow Press Magazines Ltd., London E15 3JA

© Copyright 1979

After the Battle is published quarterly on the 15th February, May, August and November

United Kingdom Newsagent Distribution:
Seymour Press Ltd., 334 Brixton Road
London SW9 7AG. Telephone 01-733 4444

United States Trade Distribution and Subscriptions:
Sky Books International, Inc.,
48 East 50th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Canadian Distribution and Subscriptions:
Yesterday's Glory, PO Box 393,
Dorval, Quebec, H4Y 1B1

Dutch Language Edition:
Tijl Periodieken Service
Drift 13,
3512 BR Utrecht, Holland
Telephone: 030-319446

CONTENTS

From the editor . . .
— a round-up of 25 issues of *After the Battle* 1

THE LADY BE GOOD
Mission 109 34
Sixteen-year mystery 37
The search begins 41
The desert gives up its secret 42

PRESERVATION
Tank destroyer restoration 50

Front Cover: May 18, 1978 — Peter Gray works on the M-10 tank destroyer, still firmly hemmed in by other vehicles, scrap and thirty years' undergrowth.

Back Cover: June 7, 1979 — just over one year later, the M-10 in a moment of triumph, rolling on its tracks down Rue St. Malo in Bayeux during 'Overlord II' — the Military Vehicle Conservation Group rally to Normandy.

Centre Pages: Previously pictured on the front cover of *After the Battle* No. 8, derelict at the side of the N179 south of the town, this is the re-furbished Tiger I at Vimoutiers, France.

Acknowledgements: We are indebted to all our readers throughout the world who have taken the time and trouble to write and give us their personal experiences or comments during the past six years. Without their interest in *After the Battle* this 'round-up' issue could not have been published. We apologise to the hundreds of others whose letters could not be included through lack of space.

The *Lady Be Good* story is largely based on the book of the same name by Dennis E. McClendon published by The John Day Company, New York.

Photographs designated IWM are the copyright of the Imperial War Museum, London

ISSN: 0306-154X

Warnham War Museum, which opened at Easter 1976, is the location for the first military vehicle auction to be held by Sotheby King and Chasemore.

September 1, 1979 marks a significant event in the 'after the battle' scene when Messrs. Sotheby King and Chasemore hold their very first military vehicle auction. The venue will be the Warnham War Museum on the A24 near Horsham in Sussex, the museum created by Joe Lyndhurst whose personal collection of vehicles featured in our first issue. The sale will include associated items of militaria, uniforms and memorabilia and catalogues will be available from the auctioneers' office on August 15. Viewing will be possible on the morning of the sale, the auction beginning at 2.30 p.m. Refreshments will be available on site from Tyldens Restaurant.

Although the Ministry of Defence have held sales of military vehicles and stores at Ruddington, Nottinghamshire for many years, these have naturally not offered material of interest to Second World War enthusiasts. The Sotheby auction will cater solely for the historic collector and a successful sale will see its continuance as an annual event.

For catalogues write to Sotheby King and Chasemore, Pulborough, Sussex or telephone 07982 2081.

This well-restored Daimler Dingo is one of the lots to be offered for sale. Viewing begins at 9.00 a.m. on Saturday, September 1.

On the site of one of the casemates of Baterie Todt near Wissant in October 1978. This feature on the German Channel defences should appear during the next twelve months.

From the editor . . .

Six years ago, the first issue of *After the Battle* was published. I for one would certainly not have predicted that I would be sitting down to write an introduction to our 25th issue. As a family, we are thrilled to see how enthusiastically our initial concept has been received by readers all over the world, not that I can claim the theme of 'then and now' photographs is fundamentally new.

The idea for the magazine stemmed from an almost obsessive interest since childhood to see what the battlefields of the Second World War looked like today. Although, as my name implies, I am a product of the early war years, my personal memories of the conflict are few. However as a schoolboy in the late forties and early fifties, one was nurtured on the early post-war television documentaries. Little did my geography master realise the reason for my being kitted up with scarf and cycle clips by the end of the afternoon lesson on Wednesdays — ready to make the dash home in time to catch the afternoon repeat of *Victory at Sea.*

After that came the BBC documentary *War in the Air* and then, in 1959, the *After the Battle* series of programmes in which six war correspondents returned to the scenes of some of their most famous wartime despatches. This programme had a lasting effect on me (or so my wife says) and I have never been the same since. As our local newspaper headlined in a feature on our travels, our 'honeymoon was spent in wartime bunkers!' It is largely due to her tolerance that the magazine continues. The fact that she is prepared to forgo her holidays for battlefield tours, year after year, is one for which I am very grateful. (Our son Gordon naturally approves of the idea although he is not yet quite as mad as his father!).

Luckily I have always had a general overall interest on all aspects of the war whether on

The inspiration for the magazine was the 1959 BBC-TV six-part programme by the same name in which six war correspondents revisited locations in Germany and Italy. Here Wynford Vaughan Thomas is interviewed beside the fountain in St. Peter's Square, Rome where he heard and saw the Pope when the city was liberated in June 1944 (BBC).

Ed Murrow, the American war correspondent who made such an impact on wartime radio and on post-war television on both sides of the Atlantic, opened the 'After the Battle' TV series by interviewing Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the then Foreign Secretary, who served in the Army throughout the war rising from a Second Lieutenant in the TA in 1939 to Brigadier in 1944 (BBC).

Veteran broadcaster and commentator Richard Dimbleby interviews Dr. Max Adenauer while travelling down the Rhine in Cologne, rebuilt after the war under his supervision. Dimbleby concluded the 'After the Battle' TV series by returning to the German towns over which he flew in a wartime bomber; to the Rhine, which he crossed with the first assault troops; to Belsen which he entered with British forces and to Berlin.

land, sea or in the air in all the different theatres of any nation that took part and can get equally enthusiastic about all. This broad interest I feel may have helped in presenting a wider cross section of stories although I accept that some readers will have a specific or more defined personal interest. All our readers have been most patient and every issue has been received with enthusiasm.

Design of the first four issues of the magazine was undertaken by Alan W. Hall, editor of *Aviation News;* subsequent editions being my sole responsibility. As the series developed I felt the need to present stories in greater detail rather than cram two major stories in each issue and not do justice to either. When I look back on the first Normandy issue I feel we would have done a much better job now with the knowledge and experience gained as we have gone on. (Things went so badly at the beginning that all the comparison photographs for No. 1 had to be retaken because of my amateur picture taking. In time of necessity, one soon learns fast and the best way is by your mistakes — or so my father told me!)

In any published work it is impossible not to introduce the odd error however hard one tries to eliminate these. There is always the per-

Robert Barr, post-war writer of television documentaries, inspects a monument representing Nazi superman at the 'School for Fuehrers' at Vogelsang near Aachen. He had a narrow escape there during the war when he entered this area believing it to have been unoccupied (BBC).

Frank Gillard, in 1959 the BBC's West Region Controller, gave his impression of Normandy fifteen years after he made some of the first war recordings from Mulberry Harbour at Arromanches seen in the background (BBC).

After considerable detective work, Robert Reid (right) traced Madame Bertholen (then Mlle. Bourdon) who he had not seen since interviewing her in the village of Percy during the battle for St. Lo in 1944 (BBC).

Picture with a story. *Above:* **The scene in Ramillies-Offus on September 9, 1944 and** *below* **in May 1979. Photo taken outside No. 2 Rue Joseph Guilleaume.**

sonal knowledge of those who were there at the time or that of the amateur historians who make a detailed study of one particular period or incident which no one with just a general interest could ever match. All I can say is that we do our very best to correct errors, especially with the captioning of photographs, as many mistakes which were committed to paper at the time have often been perpetrated by some post-war authors. Because we visit the locations for every photograph, we can vouch for many factors which may not otherwise seem apparent. I have included here an example of what I mean. This photo was taken in Ramillies-Offus in Belgium in September, 1944 and is reproduced in the official US Army pictorial record *The War Against Germany: Europe and Adjacent Areas* published by the Office of the Chief of Military History in Washington.

The picture is captioned in the book (page 197) 'A wounded German is given medical aid by US soldiers'. The original wartime text as issued with the photograph is a little more descriptive: 'Ramillies-Offus, Belgium. A Belgian civilian stands by and watches a group of American soldiers giving a wounded German prisoner first aid in the street. The town was taken by the Americans as they advanced through Belgium.'

However, the true story behind this photograph was uncovered by one of our Belgian readers, Jacques de Vos from Ghent, who spoke to the old man in the photograph before he died. The German was a motor-cyclist who came round the bend in the background. The GI on the left in the photograph opened fire with his Thompson sub-machine gun, and the German crashed off his motorbike on the corner. The other GIs seen in the photograph are, in reality, rifling the wounded man's pockets!

It was an ex-Sapper writing from Glasgow in June 1975 who set the record straight regarding the famous D-Day photograph we used on page 1 of issue No. 1. I had accepted the official caption as being correct; however Mr. Proctor knew differently: 'These assault troops, for believe me, that was the initial assault on Normandy beach at Lion sur Mer in the early hours of June 6 (morning misty after the storm of the previous day) and the gallant troops in that first assault in your caption were the 84th Field Company Royal Engineers, not as you quote the South Lancs. Perhaps, you may notice in the right foreground Corporal David Dutton with his Beach Group flash (an anchor on a pale blue background) on his left arm.'

Peter Woodward of Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicestershire had previously written a letter to us in February 1974 concerning the same picture. He wanted us to give credit to the photographer concerned — Sergeant James Mapham — a name which crops up many times throughout *After the Battle.* Sergeant Mapham served with the Army Film and Photographic Unit throughout the desert campaign and in north-west Europe and

Left: **Sergeant Jimmie Mapham of the Army Film and Photographic Unit talking to the Mayor of Caen on July 10, 1944 and** *above* **his famous photograph taken on D-Day. Corporal Dutton in right foreground (IWM).**

ended up as Field-Marshal Montgomery's personal photographer in 1945.

My worst two mistakes were to marry Mrs. McAuliffe, wife of the 'Screaming Eagles' Brigadier to the wrong man (issue No. 4 page 12) and to kill off Captain Payne Best prematurely (issue No. 11 page 39). Only *one* reader noticed the former error (the eagle-eyed Jacques de Vos) and it was due to a letter in March 1976 from one of our Dutch readers, Harry A. Bulhof of Oosterbeek, that we discovered that Captain Best was still alive in Yorkshire. His publishers had categorically told us that he died 'some years ago' and royalty payments on his book *The Venlo Incident* were no longer made. When I put pen to paper to write and apologise to Captain Best he replied that, 'I can assure you that I am both alive and, according to medical opinion likely to remain so for many years to come. That you should have been misinformed as to my demise by Hutchinsons in no way surprises me . . . only the statement that they have not paid me any royalties was correct, for neither have they ever taken any reasonable measures to further the sale of my book *The Venlo Incident* nor protect my copyright. I think that they had a potential best-seller which was also the opinion of Mr. Hutchinson who unfortunately timed his suicide to coincide with the date of its publication with consequent disruption of the firm's sales force. Most of the contents have appeared in translation in many continental publications without any knowledge of this fact apparently being known to the publishers.'

Having made contact with the ex-secret agent, it was with sad regret that we read of Captain Best's final demise in September 1978.

How many readers of early copies of No. 3 realised we gave the wrong date of death for Wing Commander Guy Gibson in the caption on page 11 although the correct date was clearly visible on the photograph above it? (Only one, Peter J. Woodward again of Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicestershire). And only Mr. A. Randon wrote from Malta to ask for an explanation of the caption of the centre-page gun in the same issue. He asked how it could have been taken, as we stated, on June 5, 1943 as the North African campaign ended on May 13. So much for official captions!

As an example of the way the modern historian cannot compete with eye-witnesses to the actual event, this is a letter received from Sir Robert Ricketts, Bt., in November 1978:

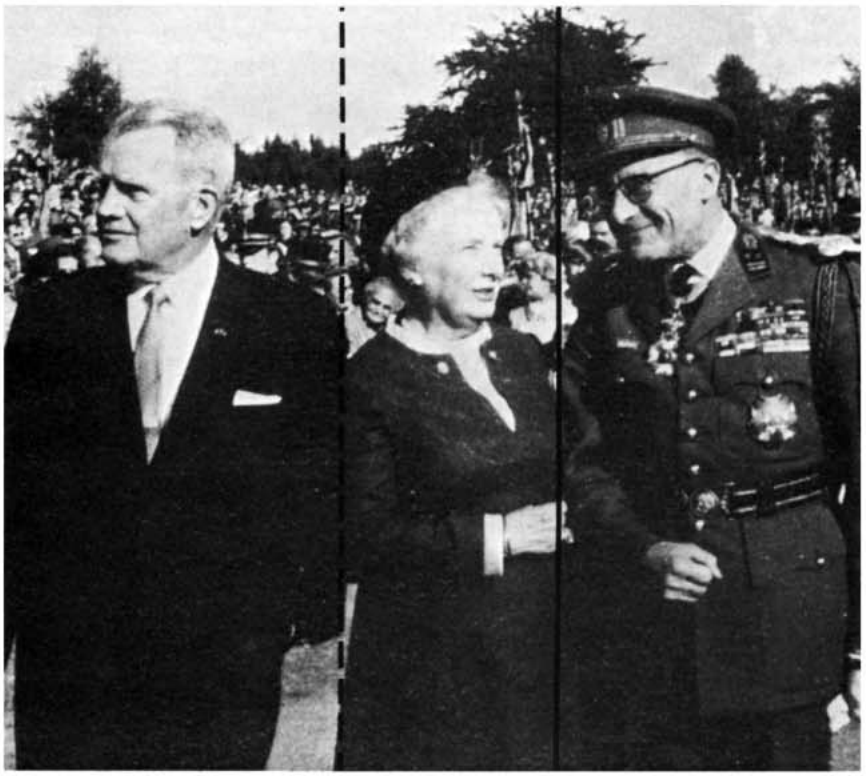
I found the account of "The Death of General Sikorski" in Number 21 exceedingly interesting. I have one or two minor comments in connection with the account which may interest you to keep with your own copy of No. 21. These are as follows:-

Page 3. Last Paragraph. '. . . *a cocktail party in the garden of the United States Mission Library*'.

I do not remember the existence of any such garden. The American Liaison Officers were based on the United States Consulate in Mediterranean Terrace, which was immediately behind the garden of the Garrison Library. If the Consulate had a garden, it could only have been the size of a pocket-handkerchief. The cocktail party on 4th July 1943 was held in the garden of the Garrison Library. I enclose a photocopy of my invitation to the party.

Page 10. Last Paragraph. 'Late on Monday the two coffins. . . '

The procession moved off across Grand Casemates Square at 20.30 hours. The open lorry carrying General Sikorski's body was not, however, then 'followed by the Governor and other high-ranking officers'. The General shown in the top photograph on this page immediately behind the lorry is not Lieutenant-General Sir Noel Mason-Macfarlane but my own Chief, Major-General F. G. Hyland, whose official title was Chief of



My worst error. Early issues of No. 4 portrayed the marriage of Mrs. Tony McAuliffe to Belgian Army hero Dr. Albert Guerisse of Korea fame and also of WWII under his war name, Lieutenant Commander Pat O'Leary GC, DSO, RN. The solid line shows the correct masking, the dotted line my mistake.

Staff and Deputy Fortress Commander. I can be sure of this because (a) I have this photograph and (b) it is I who am marching behind Major-General Hyland, followed in turn by a Colour party from the 2nd Battalion, the Somerset Light Infantry.

It is correct that the procession, after leaving Grand Casemates Square, did not take the direct route to the Roman Catholic Cathedral, which would have been south along Main Street, but proceeded instead south along Line Wall Road. The reason for this and for the fact that the Governor was not in the procession at the start was one of those human foibles which alter events but are not officially recorded! The shore-based Admiral at 'The Mount' at this time, who had succeeded the ill-fated Admiral Sir Dudley North, was Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Edward-Collins. Sir Frederick (whose official title was, first, Flag-Officer Gibraltar and Mediterranean approaches, and, later, Vice-Admiral Commanding North Atlantic) was a portly man. The weather was hot (as we know from what subsequently happened to the coffins) and Sir Frederick flatly refused to march up a long stretch of Main Street. He would join the procession nearer to the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Obviously the Governor, as Commander-in-Chief, could not march up Main Street and be joined at some point by the Admiral — they must both join the procession together. A compromise was reached. Major-General Hyland, as Deputy to the Governor, would march in the procession when it moved off, the Governor and the Admiral would join it at a point on the Line Wall Road, and the procession would then turn into Main Street.

Accordingly, the procession marched south along the Line Wall Road, as shown in the top photograph on page 11. The officer who is now shown marching behind the lorry and in front of Major-General Hyland was no doubt there to ensure that all was well with the lorry.

I do not think that the statement that the procession returned 'to the Cathedral on Main Street from the opposite direction' can possibly be correct. That it is not correct is borne out by (a) the bottom left-hand photograph on page 11 and (b) the top left-hand photograph on page 12. To take these two photographs:-

(a) The procession is not, as the caption states, 'marching northwards.' It is marching southwards. The mounted military police are passing the Roman Catholic Cathedral on their left and the rear of the infantry procession is just about opposite John Mackintosh Square, the position of which is indicated, in this photograph and the one next to it, by the trees in the distance on the left. The most suitable point for the procession to have left the Line Wall Road and enter Main Street so as to be in the position shown in this photograph is John Mackintosh Square, which lies between the Line Wall Road and Main Street. The procession, as it reached the Square, would have turned east into it, crossed it, and immediately turned south into Main Street. This manoeuvre would have produced the result shown in this photograph. At some point on the Line Wall Road, probably by the entrance to John Mackintosh Square, the Governor and the Admiral joined the procession for the last stage of its march.

(b) The open lorry, facing southwards, is now outside the main door of the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Immediately behind it are (i) nearest to the camera, the Governor and (ii) beside him, the Admiral. The officer behind the Admiral may have been the A.O.C.

Thankfully we have a perceptive and informed readership and any errors pointed out to us are always corrected in subsequent reprints of that edition.

Have you ever wished that the ground would open up and swallow you? That's just the way I felt over the following 'restoration comedy' which occurred just before this issue went to press. Just days before we were due on Gibraltar television to present the propeller recovered from the sea (Issue 24) to the Mayor, we received the result of a long-awaited report from the Accidents Investigation Branch of the Department of Trade. We had planned this expert examination in August 1978 to authenticate the propeller, an essential pre-requisite to the publication of the story of its recovery. However, the reluctance of the Gibraltar authorities to allow the propeller to leave the Rock tied our hands and many months were wasted in negotiations by letter, delaying the desired examination until after the story had gone to press in April 1979. We had, of course, contacted General Dynamics (Convair Division) in America, successors to Consolidated who made the aircraft, and all the evidence indicated that the propeller was from Liberator AL523.

When the report was finally received it proved to be a bombshell: the propeller could not possibly have been fitted to the Liberator II used by General Sikorski! After my initial incredulous reaction, a more reasoned approach led to a meeting with Department of Trade experts in London. After examining all the new evidence I reluctantly had to accept that we had spent a great deal of time and effort raising a propeller once fitted to a Dakota or Flying Fortress! Although my embarrassment was extreme, my face was not as red as it would have been had we gone through with the televised presentation. Naturally a revised edition of issue 24 was put in hand as soon as we knew our story was inaccurate — meanwhile a huge 12ft diameter 500lb lump of metal has well and truly been christened 'Winston's Folly'.

One problem we have been faced with has been the lack of overall support the magazine has received from the retail trade. This is indicative of their general apathy towards specialist publications regardless of their merits. We therefore appreciate the loyalty of

The American Liaison Officers

in commemoration of the

One Hundred Sixty Seventh Anniversary of the

Independence of the United States

request the pleasure of your company

at the Gibraltar Garrison Library Garden

on Sunday, 4th July, 1943.

Sherry: 6 to 8.

Above: **Sir Robert Ricketts' official invitation to the garden party proving that this was held in the Garrison Library Garden** *(below)* **not the nearby garden of the US Mission as portrayed in issue 20, page 3.**

all those readers in the UK who have persevered with their local newsagents or placed subscriptions with us. At least one reader Mr. A. E. Court, ex-Fourteenth 'Forgotten' Army in India and Burma, was introduced to the magazine in an unusual way when his son-in-law (who, works in the Bowater paper-conversion plant in Ellesmere Port in Lancashire) spotted a bundle of reject magazines about to be recycled into pulp! According to the various excuses given to readers trying to obtain copies of *After the Battle* from one well-known chain of stationers, we have been blamed for being 'out of stock', 'gone broke', 'ceased publication' or 'on strike'!

Many requests have been received by potential advertisers requesting advertising space but this, although financially desirable, would spoil and interrupt the layout. (Although *After the Battle* has a high cover price, readers might like to make their own comparisons with other journals viz-a-viz the actual number of text pages.

I have always attempted to refrain from giving my personal opinion on past events as everyone has their own point of view. I feel that it is virtually impossible to make any judgement now concerning any event in the past because our opinions are clouded and blurred by all the knowledge we have absorbed since the event. We are unable to think or see any incident in the past uncluttered with all that we have since experienced. One must accept that people always make the best decision according to the facts as they know them at the time.

An interesting letter on this point came from David W. Richardson of Kansas City, Missouri in October 1976 who was then undertaking detailed research on the controversial bombing of the Abbey at Monte Cassino in 1944. The bombing incident is one which has been argued over by many post-war 'armchair' historians. However there is no doubt when one stands in Cassino town today to see the monastery literally towering above you (no photographs I have seen or taken convey this impression adequately) that the building was an immense psychological advantage to those that held it. This was, perhaps, just as important as a physical advantage. (I also believe that one cannot write about a subject, place or battle unless one has actually visited the area and appreciated the various problems involved at the time 'on site'!)

Another interesting and pertinent point was raised by Mr. I. W. Delvin in a letter we received in May 1975: 'If the TV impact in the 1950s had been at the 1960 level, the Communists would have been able to create the Indo-China situation in Koreal' Mr. Devlin commented that, 'we never learn from history — or perhaps the politicians don't.' My reply to readers (and the politicians as a reminder) is the pair of comparison pictures on this page — of Neville Chamberlain returning from Munich. Whilst it may have given the Allies a breathing space in their hasty pre-war rearmament programme, it no doubt contributed to Hitler's belief that he could take over countries with impunity. (Leaders of the free world please note).

Historic Heston airport, in 1938 London's main civil aerodrome, has now disappeared with the construction of the M4 motorway which completely bisects the old airfield. The terminal buildings were occupied by the Civil Aviation Authority until 1979 when they were quietly and unceremoniously pulled down. We thought it would be interesting to pinpoint the exact spot where Neville Chamberlain stepped from his Lockheed Electra and, with the help of local aviation historian Peter Norris, we established that the location is now an unpretentious corner of the westbound Heston Services car park!

As this feature is a personal discourse I am going to treat myself to one personal comment. One of my pet hates is the current

Above: **British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returns to Heston from visiting the Fuehrer in September 1938 (Charles E. Brown).** *Below:* **The line of surburban houses on the skyline is all that now remains to identify the location following the construction of the M4 service station.**

cult fashion of 'faction' books and films. These take a true incident in history and then seek to novelise it for the sole purpose of making money regardless of the damage it may do to history in the long run. In years to come people will find it hard to differentiate between fact and fiction and already the recent TV film about the wartime desert crash of a B-25 has been referred to by several people as the 'story' of the *Lady Be Good*. (I have included the story of the latter in this issue for, although it has been told many times before, it remains *the* classic 'after the battle' story.) Other recent factions have been *The Eagle Has Landed* by Jack Higgins (an assassination attempt on the life of Winston Churchill). *Shadow of the Wolf* by Donald James and Tony Barwick about Rudolf Hess with the film *Brass Target* as the latest fantasy on the way General Patton was the subject of a military/political assassination plot in 1945. Admittedly, in his book (titled *The Algonquin Project* on the screen and in America but *The Oshawa Project* elsewhere!) Fred Nolan has changed the names (to protect the innocent as Jack Webb of Dragnet fame used to say) so that he can claim his book is fiction. However in the film MGM have gone the whole hog and Patton gets killed (with his own weapon!) helped by Sophia Loren.

One of our most awkward moments came during our preparation for issue No. 8 on Falaise. The British Official pictures we felt must be used to illustrate the Corridor of Death — which graphically portrayed the terrible carnage wrought in the 'pocket' — were devoid of any location on the brief caption in the Imperial War Museum. One of my traits (one???!!!), or so my wife tells me, is that I will never give up — the search for a particular location that is! All we had for reference was the farmhouse in the picture on page 30. During our first trip to the area in November 1974 we had searched and asked in vain to try to discover where the picture had been taken. On our return to England we managed to trace the photographer Captain Derrek Knight, ex-No. 5 Army Film and Photo Unit, who was then working in the Ministry of Defence Press Office in Whitehall. However my excitement was quickly deflated when Mr. Knight told me that he had no idea where he was at the time as every road looked the same.

We then decided the only way to establish where the picture had been taken was to publish the photographs in the local French newspaper offering a prize for the first successful reader to give the correct location. Closing date for the 'competition' was to be

February 1975 when we planned to revisit France to complete the photography. In the meantime we had also sent the photographs to a friend who, in turn, passed them to . . . you've guessed it . . . Alain Roudeix — as then unknown to us.

Anyway, having been told that a reader had identified the location, we returned to Caen where the prize-giving was to take place. Earlier on the day in question, we had been introduced to Alain Roudeix and his faithful friend Gerard Roger, (a correspondent on the *Pays d'Auge* newspaper in Vimoutiers) and we invited them to attend the evening's entertainment. It was only then that we discovered that M. Roudeix knew the location positively but, in the circumstances, we had no alternative but to go ahead with the official prize-giving.

The proceedings began in true French style — the wine flowed and the excited chatter became louder and louder. Just before the successful lady reader was announced, we were introduced to her and she gave us the location. Not having any means of verifying the spot (which we assumed would have been done by the newspaper beforehand) we confirmed this with M. Roudeix, who was keeping a low profile in the wings. To our horror he stated categorically that she was wrong and that she didn't know what she was talking about. A very embarrassing argument ensued for which our pathetic school French was completely useless. It was obvious that Alain Roudeix knew what he was talking about but this didn't cut any ice with Madame. In the end I quietly slipped her the prize money and she haughtily made her departure with her entourage of family and friends in tow.

Only once have I been forcibly ejected from a premises and it was only because I moved faster than the German's boot that I was not damaged for life! It was while looking for the location of the Munich Burgerbraukeller bomb damage picture in issue 11 page 37, that I strayed into a nearby tenement building overlooking the Great Hall. A photograph from the window of this building seemed to be ideal, and, camera swinging from my neck, I mounted the stairs to an increasing pong from somewhere ahead. The smell proved to be coming from a crude 'hole-in-the-floor' toilet although it was obvious that none of the users had worn their glasses. On the top floor of the seedy building I knocked on the door of a room which looked out to the right direction. The door was opened by a swarthy-looking character who spoke no language intelligible to me. As I prepared to enter to the nearby window, camera at the ready, an overseer or guardian (a better choice of word as it has similar spelling to gauleiter) sprang at me mouthing, 'Raus! Raus!' Jumping the first half-dozen stairs in a single bound, virtually propelled by the pressure wave from a huge hob-nailed boot, I realised I had been mistaken for a reporter attempting to expose the squalid living conditions of Germany's 'Gastarbeiters'.

To date we have only received one real complaint about the magazine — two other readers retracted their statements when we gave our explanation and pointed out that theirs was only the second complaint we had received. Obviously when balanced with the hundreds of letters of enthusiasm and praise received during the past six years, this has given us the impetus to keep the magazine going. (The one reader we upset was Mr. Bill Dykes of Tal-y-Bont, Merioneth who could not forgive us for omitting the operations of his unit in Normandy in Issue No. 1)

A perfectly valid comment on our first issue came from Rowan Bentall of Surbiton, Surrey. He asked why the 50th British Division did not have as much coverage as the 3rd British Division. This raises one of the fundamental problems with *After the Battle* — lack of suitable, matchable photographs. Where we may seem to concentrate on one unit or formation within a larger story, this is usually because their action was covered by a photographer and the others were not. Or alternatively those photographs which are available are not suitable for comparison purposes having no points of identification to establish the exact location.

The Georg Schmitz marathon. While our Colonel fights the fourth battle with another German at the far end of the table, Georg hypnotises me with his 'spiel'. Roger Bell, our European theatre authority, all hope gone, glazes over mentally broken.

Captain R. R. Midwood also felt we should have included mention of his 22nd Independent Parachute Company but again we had to explain that if photographs for comparison do not exist then it makes it difficult to include units. After all we are not claiming to be producing a definitive book on the subject and there is a limit as to what can be included in a magazine article.

Our first 'After the Battle'-style book *Airfields of the Eighth — Then and Now* received an enthusiastic reception from our readers and Eighth Air Force veterans alike. (This success has given us the enthusiasm to begin work on our second book due out early in 1980). One reader, Mr. B. R. Holliss, contacted us to advise us of his own airfield survey carried out as an Open University project in 1978. His *United Kingdom Airfields Register* lists over 900 airfields together with map references, runway details and a code letter for former uses. This A4-size, 50-page duplicated study is available price 85 pence direct from B. R. Holliss, 18 Gun Lane, Sherington, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire and is well worth the money.

Readers will have noticed that latter issues have been devoid of 'Personality' stories. This is not for want of trying on our part. Our criteria for this feature has always been only to include the war stories of those people who are well-known *not* because of what they did in the war but through their activities in civilian life. We have deliberately avoided re-telling the already-publicised stories of famous generals and career-soldiers etc. Many celebrities with interesting war careers have been contacted including Burt Lancaster (US Army Special Service); Steve McQueen (US Marines); Jimmy Edwards (RAF), Hardy Kruger (German Army) and Terry Thomas (Royal Signals) but we did not even receive the courtesy of a reply. Other personalities regretted they could not help because of pressure of other commitments — these included Norman Wisdom (British Army); Lord Anthony Barber, MP. (RAF, later POW); Robert Maxwell, MC. (British Army) and The Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, MBE, MP. (Royal Artillery).

All those personality stories which have been published have been warmly received by those concerned. David Niven commented that: 'I hope you will understand but my contribution to World War Two was so minimal and so many good friends of mine lost their lives doing so much more that I really don't want to reap the smallest bit of glory from the whole horrible mess. The photograph, incidentally, was in Normandy and I look just about as frightened as I felt!!'

We have had the good fortune to meet many varied and interesting people during the past six years and have experienced many humorous incidents. Pride of place in our 'character' list must go to Georg Schmitz who we met at Cassino, volubly escorting a coachload of German veterans around the battlefield. Georg had fought at Cassino in 1944 and we were told that he was able to keep up a non-stop commentary on the 'Pullman' from north Germany to central Italy! He visited us with a friend one evening at our hotel in Cassino for a 'chat'. First point of contention with our own guide, Colonel John Green, was that there were only three battles of Cassino not four as the history books record. (Perhaps the last was the one the Germans lost and therefore forgot!) Anyway as the evening wore on I became aware that the table was slowly emptying at my end leaving me to fend for myself against Herr Schmitz (see photo). Georg would keep disappearing inside his inexhaustible briefcase (conversation still continuing from inside it) to find various documents and photographs. At well past midnight, with most of the others from our party having retired or transfixed glassy-eyed, I was led into the darkened streets of Cassino to be shown exactly where Georg had fought. He planned to pull his 'Deutsche Pullman' across the road the following morning (and thereby stop all traffic to Rome) so that it would make a good comparison photograph with the assault gun (photo page 11 of Issue No. 13). I had to suggest to him politely that by doing this his coach might completely block out the view across the road!

One of our early personalities was Audie Murphy (Issue No. 3), ridiculed by some because of his Hollywood career, but who subsequently has been proved to have been something of an incredible serviceman. At the time I based our story largely on *To Hell and Back* which I assumed was autobiographical and factual. It later transpired through

follow-up correspondence that the book was 'ghosted' by Audie's Hollywood friend and close compatriot over many years, David 'Spec' McClure. Murphy was reluctant to talk about his wartime exploits but, when he did, McClure set down these rather disjointed reminiscences. By July 1948, some 180 pages of manuscript were in draft form. It was then that Murphy received an invitation from the French government to revisit France as its guest. He wanted 'Spec' to accompany him so that they could walk over some of his old battlefields and he could explain what had happened.

The French Tourist Board provided a photographer, an American Dick Dial, to go with them on the trip to Holtzwihr, the scene of the Medal of Honor action. When they arrived at the point where the road enters the woods, Murphy entered the thick undergrowth and revealed the old tank destroyer from which he had fought. The M10 was completely blown apart — the turret was missing and what remained of the inside was blackened by fire. Three 88mm shell holes, smooth on the outside but mushroomed inside, were visible.

The photographer began taking pictures after which Murphy pointed out where the Germans had approached his position along the drainage ditch and where his squad machine gun had been knocked out.

When they arrived back in Paris, McClure anxiously awaited development of the photographs as many questions regarding the MOH action remained to be answered. However when the film was examined, Dick Dial discovered that his camera had been faulty, leaking daylight, and that all the photographs had been ruined.

When they returned to the States, McClure tried to get on with the completion of the manuscript as Henry Holt & Company had by then agreed to publish the book. However Murphy again became reluctant to talk about the war and McClure had to drag the information from him. In desperation, he began to guess and use his imagination more than ever and lengthened chapters by including fictional GI dialogue picked up from his own war service. The names were also changed, thus Private Joe Sieja killed in January 1944 at Anzio became Pte. Johnson and Private Lattie Tipton, shot in the foxhole near Ramatuelle in August 1944, was renamed Pte. Brandon.

A monumental book *Audie Murphy — American Soldier* written by Colonel Harold B. Simpson which appeared in 1976 published by The Hill J. R. College Press, Hillsboro, Texas should appeal to all Murphyphiles although David McClure still feels that the full story of Murphy's accomplishments is yet to be told.

We receive many letters suggesting themes for future issues and one re-occurring request is for more on North Africa. We had one sally to Tunisia in issue No. 12 but enquiries made on this trip and subsequently clearly showed the problems we would face. Firstly comparisons of desert locations would be pretty impossible and of little interest without buildings or background.

Secondly, contrary to popular belief, the desert is no longer littered with derelict tanks and war material. The roaming Arabs are much too wise to allow anything that will fetch money to be left untouched and all accessible scrap has been cleared, much by the British Army who used the desert for training in the late 1940s and early fifties. Minefields do remain an acute problem, one which the Libyans have raised forceably with the United Nations. Armies of many countries fought across their country sowing mines by the million and, subsequently, made little or no attempt to remove the danger. The Libyans claim that maps of the minefields are not made available to them and their location is not made easier by wandering nomads who have removed the barbed-wire marking the perimeters to sell. Shifting sands compound the problem of clearance. So the danger of wandering off the beaten track in North Africa is obvious as many three-legged camels and limbless Arabs can testify.

A third problem is the fact that the main area of operations in the see-saw desert battles of 1940-43 lies in Libya. Since American and British forces were banned from the country, western tourists are not encouraged. Former Allied and Axis aerodromes are now in prohibited zones and an example of this can be seen in the *Lady Be Good* story in this issue where the former Wheelus Air Base outside Tripoli is now occupied by Russian civilian technicians. Although the *Lady Be Good* story may be well known to some of our readers, it loses nothing by further telling. Some might consider it as *the* most fascinating story of human endurance to come out of the Second World War.

One oft-repeated request is for coverage of Anzio. This was one of the first subjects on our list of battles to be covered and we visited the area in April 1976. What we came up against is typical of the many problems we have had to surmount in producing *After the Battle.*

Before we reach a particular area, we are never sure exactly what is still left or what conditions are like today. Thus with Anzio, whilst the British landing beaches are freely used by holiday makers, the American zone now lies within a restricted military training area. As it would be impossible to publish the story omitting the American side (heaven forbid!), we tried our utmost to obtain entry to the Italian camp. When this failed because we had no 'autorizzazione', we thought that aerial views might be the answer. The only airfield in the area at Latina is a joint military/civil one with the accent firmly on military with armed guards at the entrance. Although we traced a civilian who had a plane hangared on the aerodrome, he said it would be almost impossible to get in carrying a camera (we use a large 6X7 Pentax for aerial shots). With time running out, we decided to go to the next nearest civil airfield which turned out to be Aeroporte d'Urbe east of Rome some fifty kilometres away. There we found that any aerial photography was only possible if we had a licence from the Italian Ministry of Defence regardless of the area to be photographed as all Italian air (space?) belongs to the military authorities! As our timetable did not allow us to wait the six to nine months necessary to get permission, we had to return home empty-handed.

Over the next eighteen months we obtained the necessary permission which stated that the photography had to be carried out using an authorised firm from a certain airfield on a

Ground photography underway for our Anzio edition. This is the centre of the Italian 'new town' of Aprilia built during the Mussolini Fascist era and the scene of bitter fighting between British and German forces in 1944 (IWM).

Mr. E. G. Hall of Leamington Spa pointed out that we had not mentioned, in the Heydrich story in our last issue, the existence of the Czech memorial unveiled in his town on October 26, 1968. The memorial, which stands in Jephson Gardens, is in the form of a fountain with seven pillars supporting a stone parachute from which seven streams of water cascade. It was erected by the Association of Czechs in Exile in memory of all Czechs and Slovaks who died during the war but, in particular, to the seven men who died in the church in Prague in 1942. A house which once stood in Newbold Terrace was the Free Czech HQ for the planning of the assassination (J. G. Prestidge).

certain day. We therefore had to take a chance that the specified day would be suitable for flying and fixed a return trip for September 1977. To help minimise the additional cost, we planned to complete three other stories whilst in the area, two of which have been published (in Issues 18 and 22). However when we arrived at the specified airport at the appointed time on the agreed date, we found it closed for runway repairs. We tried numerous other firms to take photographs for us and to hire an aircraft from Rome's old airport at Campino but the prices requested for a flight of one hour varied from £400 to £1,500 just because we wanted to take air photos. (Equivalent UK prices would be £30 or up to £50 in some other Continental countries.)

At the time of writing our Anzio story is still awaiting photography of the American beaches although we hope soon to be able to take the necessary aerial photographs using another contact at another airfield at a sensible price. The delay in the publication of the Anzio story is all the more galling for us as the Italian Tourist Board is making a special drive to interest British, American, Canadian, German, French and Polish tourists to visit Cassino and Anzio during the current year.

We have had several requests regarding the possibility of stories on battles or incidents in locations now behind the Iron Curtain. Two official requests we made to East European authorities for permission to take photographs fell on deaf ears (Peenemunde and Nordhausen for the V-weapons story in Issue No. 6) but our last edition on the assassination of Heydrich indicates that we have a desire to and will publish such stories where possible. However, I have no desire to be featured on the pages of your daily newspapers as a 'businessman arrested for photographing military secrets'. (Two of our contacts *have* been taken into custody for questioning by Communist police for attempting research on our behalf.)

Several readers asked if it would be possible to include stories on other campaigns including the First World War but I decided at the outset that there was so much material on the Second War that it was best to stick to one period. Earlier wars posed problems of matching locations which have changed drastically over the years and obviously there is a lack of photographic material pre-1900. It was for this reason that we published Miss Rose Coombs guide to the battlefields of the First World War *Before Endeavours Fade* which we felt was a better way to treat this period in history.

We are always interested to learn of the practical use of the magazine and the Deputy Head of the Department of War Studies and International Affairs at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, Mr. D. G. Chandler, MA, wrote in July 1977 to say how useful he found *After the Battle* in preparing Battlefield Tours for officers and cadets especially for visits to Remagen and Bastogne.

At least two school parties have used issues of *After the Battle* to guide continental tours — Major R. H. B. Chapman, OC of the Combined Cadet Force at Kingham Hill School at Oxford, wrote to say that the boys found both the Normandy and Arnhem issues useful and pupils from Haileybury and Imperial Service College in Hertfordshire sent us a nice photograph of their party visiting the Remagen bridge.

Many other readers have used the series as a basis for their own battlefield tours and their comments are always welcome. Typical is that

Simon and Robert Ayres and Mark Adams from Haileybury School visit the Remagen bridge in September 1978 on a tour arranged by their German language master, Bill Keay.

from Mr. W. D. M. Thomas of Coventry in September 1975:

'Each summer I tour parts of France and have always been extremely interested in relics of World War II (ex-RAF) and would like to congratulate you on the detail and photographs in your magazine. I have visited almost all the sites mentioned and a few more and have my own collection of slides of these places. I went to the Watten site and completely agree with your remarks in your Issue No. 6. I was there three weeks ago and was subjected to a tour which took an hour-and-a-half conducted by gentlemen in para-military uniforms who harangued the group of about fifty people in French for at least an hour-and-a-quarter. Although the building is impressive, as it was never used it is difficult to understand why so many words were necessary!

Corporal P. Dobson, 3RTR BAOR, wrote to tell us that he took his copy of No. 9 to Berchtesgaden and spent 'a couple of days wallowing in history . . . re the garage (page 5) under the Berghof — did you take the lock-plate shown in the bottom picture? I couldn't find it when I looked. (Answer on page 30).

Of all the places we have covered so far, readers will find that Malta has changed the most since publication of our story in November 1975. Not only have the intervening years seen the demise of the British forces who were then stationed on the island but civil engineering projects have drastically altered several locations.

For many ex-servicemen, the withdrawal of the Royal Air Force, Army and Royal Navy on March 31, 1979 will read as a sad note. Whatever the rights or wrongs of former British colonisation policies, the tie with Malta forged with her friendly people through the seige of 1941-42, has a basis deeper than just nostalgia for the 'old days'. Such events are made doubly sad when the sacrifices of the past are belittled; the once proud appendage of GC to record the award of the George Cross to the island is now quietly omitted and the celebration to end the British 'occupation' was commemorated by the authorities in Malta by statue and verse.

(The Commonwealth War Graves Commission wrote to advise us that 'On reading the section on Malta 1975 a small discrepancy was found on page 32 where you say 'No German or Italian war dead from the Second World War remain on the island today'. There are in fact 3 Italian Naval and 2 unidentified Italian Air Force casualties in Malta (Capuccini) Naval Cemetery. With reference to the figures given for the German war dead of the 1914/18 war, the only graves remaining are 5 in Addolorata Cemetery, the 27 at Rinella having been concentrated to a German Cemetery in Sardinia.')

It very soon became clear on our visits to Germany that our efforts were not appreciated by the natives and considered in very poor taste. The attitude from most Germans was: why did we British continually want to remember the war; why could we not forget the happenings of the past. Having lost the war (but undoubtedly won the peace) this attitude is perhaps only to be expected but to be sure, if the boot had been on the other foot, the Nazi propaganda machine would have churned out books and publications on a German victory — as their publishing houses did in the early years of the war. However what is even more disturbing was the recent publicity campaign mounted by the Germans against British war publications and TV and cinema films portraying the Second World War. Children's comics came in for special criticism. Syndicated articles on this subject appeared in the British provincial press in May 1977 — from South Wales to Lincolnshire and from Devon to Hull. Whether it is official German policy to play down the past is not clear but certainly pressure has been brought on the Jahr Organisation in Hamburg to cease publication of the part-work *Das Dritte Reich* and attempts have been made to muzzle the sales of *After the Battle* in Germany. (I seem to have read somewhere about something about the banning of books in Germany once before — can't remember where?!)

As an illustration of the changes in Malta during the past four years, Paul Albanese has retaken for us the two comparisons on page 18 of issue No. 10. The photo *above*, facing the Cardiff Bar, shows how the old dock has now been filled in for the construction of a new container berth. Cross Road, which ran in front of the bar, is now closed and Trunk Road now lives up to its name, part of the bridge having been demolished to make it a main route to Luqa, *photo below.*

The other side of the argument was frighteningly illustrated in a recent German survey, conducted by an educational researcher, Dieter Bossman, which revealed a frightening ignorance about Hitler and the Nazi regime amongst West German school-children.

When asked: 'What have you heard about Adolf Hitler?' the following were some of the replies he received from 14-17-year-olds:

'As long as Adolf Hitler was in power in Germany there was peace. There was no hunger, the currency was stable, unemployment went down. Under his control everything was well organised.'

'He helped Germany back on its feet after the Second World War and died sometime between 1950 and 1956.'

'I believe he was a good person and that he fought on the side of the good. Only the fact that he was a Jew annoyed people.

'Hitler was a strong politician. One day, when the war got too much for him, he jumped over the cliff with his girl friend.'

The survey, according to Herr Bossman, is an indictment of West Germany's methods of instructing students about the bitterest episode in its history. Parents are equally to blame, he says, in not telling their children the background to Hitler's rise to power and the atrocities committed by the Nazis.

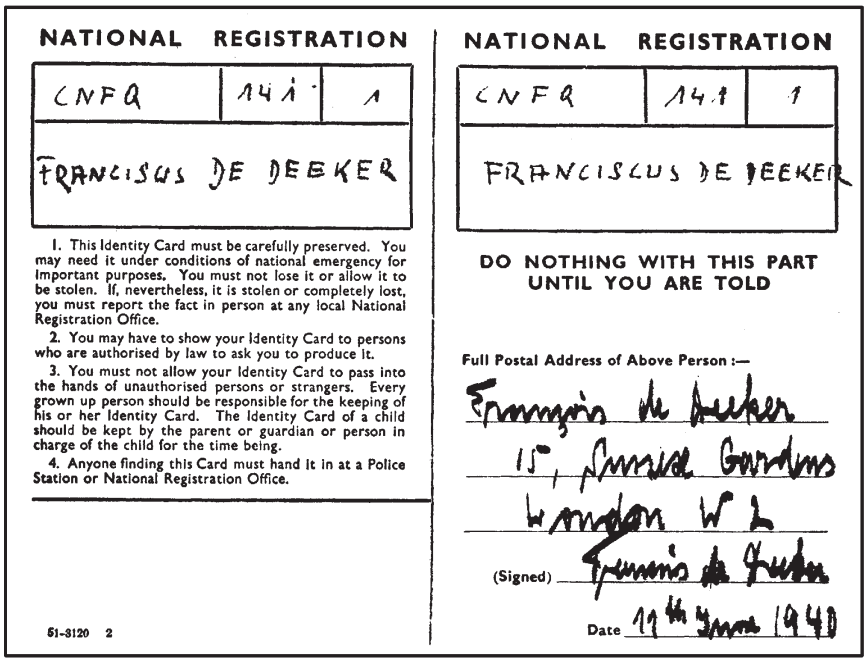
Our postbag proves that children and young people in other countries are far more aware of the true facts, thanks to the continuing interest in the Second World War.

The most amusing and bizarre incident we have discovered to date on our Second World War research, unfortunately unillustrated, happened just after D-Day. In an American Court-Martial held on August 1, 1944, three US negro soldiers were accused of transporting a woman from the British Isles to occupied France for immoral purposes. The woman, aged 21, was identified as a Welsh resident. The record of the trial shows that she joined the accuseds' unit in Porthcawl, Wales and travelled in the rear hatch of one negro's DUKW to Southampton and then to France arriving at Omaha Beach on July 12, 1944 — just over a month after the initial assault! She was discovered two days later sitting beside the DUKW in the 819th Amphibian Truck Company's bivouac area just behind the beachhead. The sentence — ten years imprisonment! (Regrettably we have been unable to trace the negroes or Miss 'X'.)

Publication of a particular edition always

brings forth interesting follow-ups from readers either to add to the story or to quote from personal knowledge of the affair. Such an issue was No. 11 dealing with German spies in England. In 1940, Mr. George I. Strath was Superintendent with the civilian police at Banff and it was he who took charge of Vera 'Erikson' and Karl Drugge from Inspector Simpson after their arrest on September 30 (pages 17-23). He wrote that 'the issue on the 'Portgordon Spies', as they were locally known, has brought back many memories of the past. I found Vera, during her brief stay at Banff, very pleasant. I have still in my possession Drugge's passport and photograph, his National Identity Card and the rail ticket Portgordon to Forres. The Germans never seemed to get over writing the figures 1 and 7 which immediately gave the show away'.

Another interesting snippet came from Yeoman Warder G. Abbott of the Tower of London. He said that, 'in November 1974 one


NATIONAL REGISTRATION
CNFQ 14 1 1
FRANCISCUS DE DEEKER
1. This Identity Card must be carefully preserved. You may need it under conditions of national emergency for important purposes. You must not lose it or allow it to be stolen. If, nevertheless, it is stolen or completely lost, you must report the fact in person at any local National Registration Office.
2. You may have to show your Identity Card to persons who are authorised by law to ask you to produce it.
3. You must not allow your Identity Card to pass into the hands of unauthorised persons or strangers. Every grown up person should be responsible for the keeping of his or her Identity Card. The Identity Card of a child should be kept by the parent or guardian or person in charge of the child for the time being.
4. Anyone finding this Card must hand it in at a Police Station or National Registration Office.
51-3120 2
NATIONAL REGISTRATION
CNFQ 14.1 1
FRANCISCUS DE DEEKER
DO NOTHING WITH THIS PART UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD
Full Postal Address of Above Person :—
Francois de Deeker
15, Sussex Gardens
London W 2
(Signed) Francois de Deeker
Date 11th June 1940

Documents belonging to the executed Karl Drugge alias Francois de Deeker in the possession of ex-Superintendent George Strath. Note the incredibly poor forged Identity Card with its continental figure 1.

Signalement — Persoonsbeschrijving
Profession / Beroep: Koopman
Lieu et date de naissance / Plaats en datum van geboorte: Brussels 20/3/1906
Domicile / Woonplaats: Kerkrade
Visage / Aangezicht: ovaal
Yeux / Oogen: blauw grijs
Cheveux / Haar: donkerblond
Signes particuliers / Bijzondere kenteekens: /
Enfants — Kinderen
accompagnant le titulaire / die den houder vergezellen
Nombre — Aantal
Age — Ouderdom
Sexe — Geslacht
3
Signature du titulaire / Handteekening van den houder
Francois de Deeker
AVIS IMPORTANT. — Le Gouvernement Belge n'interviendra pas dans les frais de rapatriement des personnes se rendant à l'étranger.
BELANGRIJK BERICHT. - De Belgische Regeering zal de kosten van repatrieering der personen die zich naar het buitenland begeven, niet helpen dragen.

of his colleagues was approached by a middle-aged lady who hesitantly explained that she was Lody's grand-daughter and she was on a pilgrimage as it were to see where he died. (Karl Lody was the first German spy executed in WWI, see page 1 of Issue No. 11.) Stretching a point, my colleague showed her the site of the .22 range — probably she was over here in connection with the gravestone erection. (This makes sense for a black marble headstone was ordered to be erected on his grave in November 1974 — see page 4).

Trefor J. Manning, former Senior Prefect at Spencer Park Comprehensive School (used for interrogations, see page 14 of Issue No. 11) wrote to point out that the correct name of the school, when it was taken over by MI5, was the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum School for Girls. Trefor was preparing a complete history of the building as part of his degree course.

The Double Cross Committee itself has received considerably more publicity since our issue was published in February 1975 although Sir John Masterman died in 1977.

Then another reader from Scotland, who wishes to remain anonymous, sent us the following interesting memorandum:

Information which suggests that the Spies 'Mutt' and 'Jeff' landed at Crovie (near Banff) on Monday, April 7, 1941.

1. All villagers, who were around at the time, are aware that two spies came ashore in a dinghy at Crovie during World War II.
2. In the book *'The Double Cross System'* it states that the spies were put into a boat on the south shore of the Moray Firth. Crovie is on the south shore.
3. Sir J. Masterman says that they landed on April 7, 1941. Though the villagers cannot recall the precise date they all agree it was sometime in 1941.
4. The villagers say that the roads were blocked by snow when the spies landed at Crovie. A local newspaper of the day confirms that roads were blocked in that area around the date quoted by Sir J. Masterman.
5. In the book *They Spied on England* it says 'High above them they could see rocky cliffs which it was clear to both of them would be a major obstacle to the transport of bicycles'. Crovie lies near the highest cliffs on the south shore of the Moray Firth.

Several authors contacted us to compliment us on this issue and to request further information, one being David *'Codebreakers'* Kahn of New York then researching his book *Hitler's Spies.* In 1978 we received a telephone call from Munich from Gunter Peis whose book *They Spied on England* inspired our own story. He said that something we had published — he wouldn't say what — had led him to trace Vera, the so-called beautiful spy. After her release from Holloway prison (having been held under Regulation 18B — the detention of aliens without trial) she went to the Continent but he found that she had died after re-marrying in Belgium. This clue could only have been the name she wrote on the slip of paper given to Inspector Simpson reproduced on page 20.

When I contacted Dr. Ronald Seth (author of several spy and espionage books) during the research for No. 11, I had no idea he now lived in Malta. Quite unknowingly, I sent him a copy of our latest issue (No. 10 on Malta) to be forwarded to him through his publishers. The subsequent result was an embarassingly complimentary letter published in the *Times of Malta:*

Sir, — About eighteen months ago, a young man called Winston Ramsey wrote to me, asking for my help in compiling an article on espionage in World War I and II for a quarterly publication he was producing called *After the Battle.*

I did the little I could and forgot all about it until about a month ago I received from Mr. Ramsey a copy of the espionage number, which, even to me, one of the (alleged) world authorities on the organization, administration and history of espionage, was completely fascinating.

I was brought up in an era when it was a 'good thing' for the young to have 'good manners'. 'Good manners', when you get down to the nitty-gritty, really means 'thoughtfulness and courtesy'.

'Thoughtfulness and courtesy' of the old-fashioned variety our young today do not display in great abundance (though I do not hold that too much against them) but when one does encounter it in the young, I find it makes a double impact.

Well, Mr. Ramsey has just revealed that he is a young man, with old-fashioned notions. He has just sent me a copy of *After the Battle* No. 10, which is devoted, except for a 'profile' on Flight Lieutenant Ian Smith, and a feature on the Dam Busters, entirely to Malta during World War II. 'As you seem to be living in Malta' he said in a brief note, 'I thought you might like to see this.'

(What I liked about this comment was the frequent use of the word 'young' especially as I now approach my 4th decade!)

Another fascinating book seems possible from the pen of F. T. O'Brien (author of *Early Solent Steamers*) on the careers of two of the merchant seamen who turned traitor, Nos. 7 and 13 on our list, Armstrong and Scott-Ford.

The latest spin-off from issue No. 11 is that BBC-TV are to produce a six-part series of dramatised documentaries called *Spy*, two episodes of which will be of special interest to our readers. One is on the Venlo incident (Issue No. 11) where the border crossing post was recreated at a wildlife park in Norfolk. The other programme concerns the Double-Cross system and BBC researcher (and *After the Battle* reader) Nigel West spent months tracking down the present whereabouts of several of the wartime double-agents featured in Sir John Masterman's book. As so much material was uncovered to which a 50-minute programme could hardly do justice, the BBC are publishing a book to go with the series called *'Spy'*, written by Richard Deacon with Nigel West. *The Sunday Telegraph* will also be featuring the Double X agents in a three-part story in the colour supplement. As a foretaste of what Nigel uncovered, we have permission to include here one of the first (if not *the* first) picture of MI5 in action. The photo shows Karl Richter (see pages 28-29 of No. 11) returning with a Security Service officer to where he had hidden his parachute close by the A405 at London Colney. After several hours searching, we were able to pinpoint the spot by reference with the poplar trees which still stand today. More photographs from this fascinating sequence will appear in *The Sunday Telegraph* colour magazine this autumn.

The village of Crovie, Gardenstown, Banffshire — believed landing spot for Mutt and Jeff (Sanderson and Dixon).

Above: **We are proud to be able to reproduce, possibly for the first time, a photograph of MI5 in action. One of sixteen pictures discovered by Nigel West while researching the forthcoming BBC TV series 'Spy'. The fence runs on top of the embankment of the A405 just a few hundred yards from where Richter was arrested. L-R: Major Stimson, Superintendent Foster, Colonel Stevens, a guard and Karl Richter.** *Below:* **The poplars still stand on the far side of the road although hidden by trees in the foreground.**

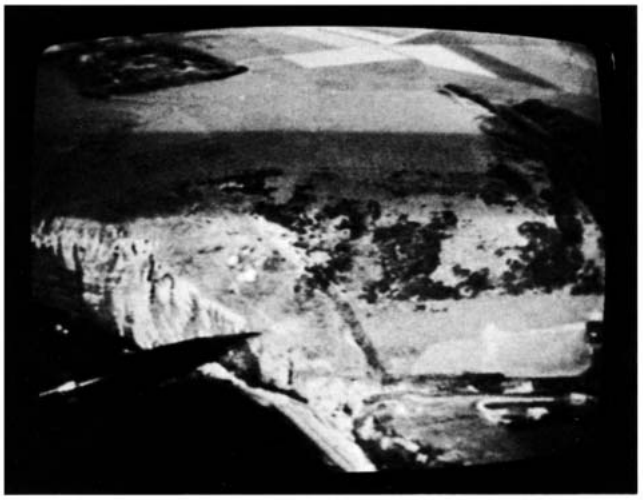
This issue also saw our entry into the film world with the making of *'Vera, the Beautiful Spy'*. Unfortunately we found out too late that making a film, albeit professionally, is the easy part — one then has to sell the end product to the indifferent, uninterested people who act as buyers for British TV.

There are two ways to make a documentary film — either with the financial backing of one of the companies, in which case one has to relinquish editorial control and therefore accuracy, or make it yourself and stand the risk of not selling it. We chose the latter course as there was no way we would be prepared to compromise any fact or original location for an easier or more photographic spot and have our name put on the final version.

However, having made our decision, this meant that there was no obligation on any TV company to purchase or even view the finished programme. The BBC, who professed initial interest, in the end said no and it was only by superhuman effort and countless telephone calls that the independent television companies were persuaded to view the film. We found that once one company had agreed to buy several others accepted almost automatically, not wishing to be left out in the cold. In the end, nine of the fifteen ITV companies agreed to show the film and it was at this stage that a quirk of the financing of ITV became apparent. A national agreement allows for each company to pay a percentage of the total fee in line with the size of their regional audience. Therefore if one fails to sell to London (as we did) one loses over fifty-per-cent of the potential income. It led to the ridiculous situation in that the region for which the story had most significance, Grampian, which covers northern Scotland, paid the smallest amount: £26 as their share of the national viewer population was only 1.283 per cent! The apathy of many of the buyers would break the stoutest heart — to this date Southern Television have still not replied to the letter and video cassette sent to them in 1975, despite countless follow-up telephone calls. My advice to any would-be film makers is a categorical 'don't waste your time' — a view we regret has affected our own willingness to assist TV companies requesting help or advice. One particular director of a Yorkshire TV programme on Dr. R. V. Jones specifically promised us a credit at the end of the programme for help we provided. No mention of our assistance appeared when the documentary was transmitted . . . or perhaps I blinked at the wrong moment! Professor Jones must always be remembered for his unique TV double appearance in which he contrived to appear on both ITV and BBC at the same time in similar programmes about 'the Secret War'. When asked to comment on his feat, he replied, 'I was reminded of that friendly signal received during the last war by an admiral who was awarded two decorations at once: "What — twice a night at your age?" '

Another film made by enthusiasts for enthusiasts is *The Hunt For X-5* by Wexford Films Ltd. Produced by John M. Cadd, who shot much of the underwater film, the documentary records the 1974 and 1976 Kaafjord expeditions to try to find the wreckage of the midget submarine *X5* (issue No. 17). It had its preview at the Imperial War Museum in March 1978 but Mr. Cadd has come up against the same selling problems as we did and, as yet, the film still awaits its TV showing.

That same issue of *After the Battle* included a detailed account of the making of the war feature *A Bridge Too Far*. According to press reports the film received a very mixed reception. To youngsters it was the best war film they had seen but to many old soldiers the



Wednesday, January 5, 1977. Professor Jones manages the impossible and appears on both BBC and ITV on the same evening in programmes with the same title ('The Secret War') — double vision as one critic described it. How many readers spotted the cheating included in the Yorkshire-produced programme? On the left the Professor picks up a wartime reconnaissance photo of the Bruneval radar site . . . his pen moves in . . . and as the camera moves in for a close-up what we see *(photo right)* is not the same picture . . . but our photograph from pages 48-49 of issue No. 13!

poetic licence taken by the film makers raised a furore. The duels of olden days have now (or rather were, when it was published) been replaced by a letter to *The Times* and its correspondence columns during July 1977 reflected the units or personnel who felt their honour had been slighted. Whilst this is no place to repeat the arguments, Sir Richard Attenborough's reply on July 12 is worthy of inclusion:

'Sir, Initially, might I say, that in no way did I intend to be discourteous by failing to reply — if such public acknowledgment was called for — to any of the letters which, although addressed to the Editor of *The Times*, referred in varying ways to me. Indeed, on my return from abroad I shall naturally be replying to the many hundreds of letters I have received in regard to *A Bridge Too Far* which, perhaps I might add, with scarcely an exception, were anything but critical. Nevertheless it would be totally insensitive on my part to pretend that no offence had been given in certain quarters when patently, albeit without malice aforethought, offence has been caused.

'I certainly have no wish to aggravate a situation which has already given concern to a number of sincere people. However, I would wish to make no apologies for the film made from Cornelius Ryan's remarkable book. The seven years he devoted to his researches serve as the basis of all we have tried to include in our film and I am only distressed that reservations in regard to the particular are possibly in danger of obscuring what perhaps even the most critical of *The Times* correspondents will allow, namely that the intentions of those involved in the making of the film were honourable.'

Typical of the many letters we receive from ex-servicemen telling us of their own experiences is the following from W. Gordon Hornsby of North Shields: 'I was very interested in your article in issue No. 17 'Prelude to Market Garden' as I was in the 1st East Lancs Regiment and took part in that operation. The map on page 7 vividly recalls that night and following days. I can recall the lines of XX as stone obelisks marking the official border between Belgium and Holland. In fact on September 17, 1944 I crossed from Belgium to Holland about a dozen times.

'The lines in the wooded area were fire breaks in the forest, and what is imprinted in my mind about that particular episode of all from landing on D-Day is that it was the longest night of my life. At 1900 hours, Double British Summer Time, I was a member of a patrol sent to guard and observe the blown up bridge just as it was on page 9 but without the Bailey bridge. We had with us a D.R. who had to push his motor cycle; after about half-a-mile, his arm was tired and so he changed to push from the other side and promptly put his hand on the horn!

'Our orders were to observe the bridge: if a patrol came across we had to lie low; if an attack in force came over we had to fight to the last man to enable the D.R. to get away and warn of the attack. All we observed was a German soldier who came down to the opposite branch and promptly proceeded to increase the level of the canal!

'Our patrol was from 1900 hours to 0700 hours. We spent a very jittery night and although we were on 2 on and 4 off, none of us slept. At 0700 hours we were very pleased, and expected our relief to show up at any moment. 0715 came without any relief, at 0730 we became a little concerned, by 0745, after a restless night of wondering if an artillery barrage was going to open up, 'jittery' was an understatement.

'At 0800 the relief patrol emerged from the forest. After expressing our vocal feelings for their late arrival in no uncertain terms, we were blandly informed that they were quite on time. Nobody had told us that the hour had been taken off Double British Summer Time.'

Another soldier who landed in the second wave on June 6 on Sword (Queen) beach, Mr. J. Dobie of Winsford, Cheshire, served as a Regimental Provost Sergeant and wrote to give us his first-hand description of the incident recorded on page 14 of issue No. 1:

'I was not far from the stores dump on D + 1 when it was bombed, it kept us out of sight for quite a long time, with jerry cans and shells flying through the air. We were very short of ammunition and petrol for the forward troops after that and everything was collected and sent forward . . . '

George Amos, now a Medical Representative with the Carnation Foods Company also contacted us to say he was at Port en Bessin with 48 Commando and was present at the sinking of the flakship on page 18. This he said was scuttled by sappers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Terence Otway pointed out one error in the description of the attack on the Merville Battery in that, 'the leader of the taping party was not Major Parry but Captain Paul (now Lord) Greenway who received the Military Cross for his efforts. Major Allen Parry was, in fact, the Company Commander of 'A' Company and, with the remainder of the Company, the reserve force for the ground attack on the Battery. Major Parry was wounded in the leg in the Battery and, just after daybreak, when I was a bit short-tempered, I was rather rude to him, as I saw him sitting in a wheelbarrow, drinking out of the largest hip flask I have ever seen and being wheeled towards the assembly point by his batman. I asked him what he was up to, to which he replied, "You don't bloody well think I'd be sitting here if I hadn't been shot, do you?" '

While on the subject of the Merville attack, Mr. T. G. W. Potts commented that he visited the site on the Camberley Staff College Battlefield Tour in 1955. They were told that 'the four guns of 76mm only fired shells weighing 13lbs and would have had a negligible effect on the invasion fleet — hence a large amount of effort went into neutralising an insignificant target'.

The Army Staff College runs regular Battlefield Tours to Normandy for officers — the lessons of the past are still as valid today. The battles studied are the 6th Airborne Division assault; the 50th Division assault on D-Day and the 11th Armoured Division's part in Operation Goodwood. Guest speakers include many personalities who fought on the spot in 1944 including Colonel Hans von Luck of the German Army.

In October 1974, Major General E. M. MacKay CBE, then Chief Engineer at HQ BAOR, sent us a nice morale-boosting letter concerning the Arnhem issue:

'Thank you very much for sending me Copy No. 2 of your magazine *After the Battle* with its excellent account of the Battle of Arnhem. I must congratulate you on the excellent range of photographs. The idea of pairing before and after photographs is particularly effective.

'Of course, I was particularly interested in your photograph of 'my' school after the battle. If I had known that it looked like that from the outside, I would probably have died of a heart attack on the spot. At the time my reaction to all those shells going through the school was 'good, that gives us more loop holes to fire out of'! I am sorry that they sent you such a sad-sack photograph of me. I am generally more cheerful.

'Anyway it was a splendid article and the photographs give the real feel of the action. That last one on page 15 of one of our parachutists being marched off into captivity is marvellous. It just epitomises the spirit of those wonderful troops which fought there.'

In December 1973, Colonel Cook wrote from the RHQ Whittington Barracks at Lichfield (the location of the notorious US 10th Replacement Depot in WWII) to correct a false impression we gave on the attempt to reach the bridge on the morning of the 19th.

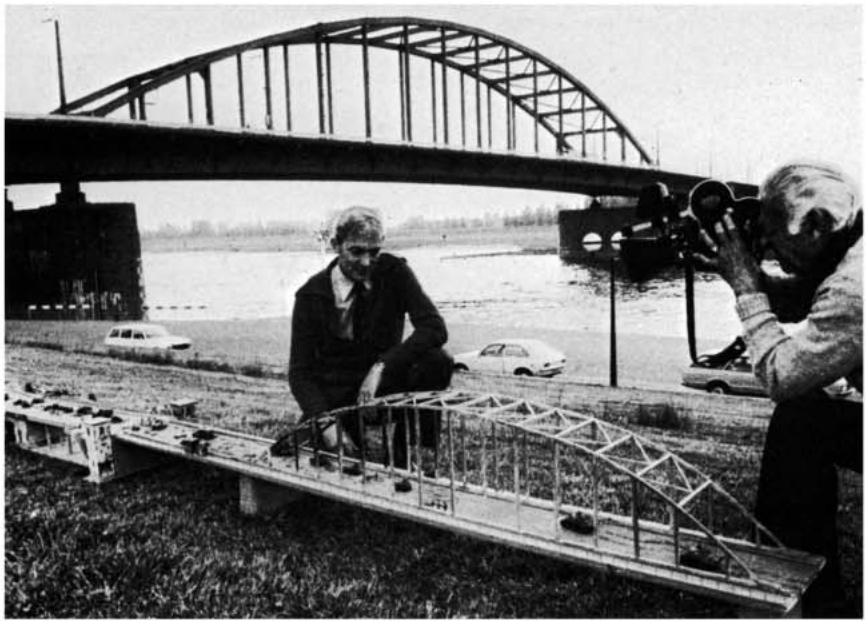
Colonel Cook pointed out that this effort was carried out by the 2nd South Staffords (less one rifle company and most of the Support Company) *alone* not by the 11th Parachute Batallion and 'elements' of the South Staffords as I had written.

During our Arnhem research we stayed in the historic Hartenstein Hotel. Sadly less than a year after our departure, the hotel closed unable to remain economically viable. Over the next couple of years the building deteriorated while discussions went on over its future. Happily the town of Arnhem decided to take it over and open it as a museum replacing the rather tatty display at Doorwerth Castle. A splendid opening ceremony was attended by Major-Generals Urquhart and Frost on May 11, 1978. By November the same year, the hordes of visitors had exceeded 60,000 confirming the faith of those in Arnhem who had vision of its potential as one of the unique historic sites of the Second World War. The cellar has been fitted out as the command post of General Urquhart who was given the honour of running up the airborne flag on the front lawn.

Mr. R. C. Hodrien took us to task on issue No. 2 over our vague captioning of German 'tanks' instead of the precise terminology of 'StuG 3 assault guns'. He also corrected our caption on the 'tank' knocked out by Lance-Sergeant Baskeyfield as being a StuG 3 on a Panzer 3 chassis. I replied that I did not profess to be an armour expert and perhaps Mr. Hodrien would like to vet future photographs personally. However even the experts can slip up and Fred L. Charlton of Washington, USA wrote to criticise a caption in issue No. 8:

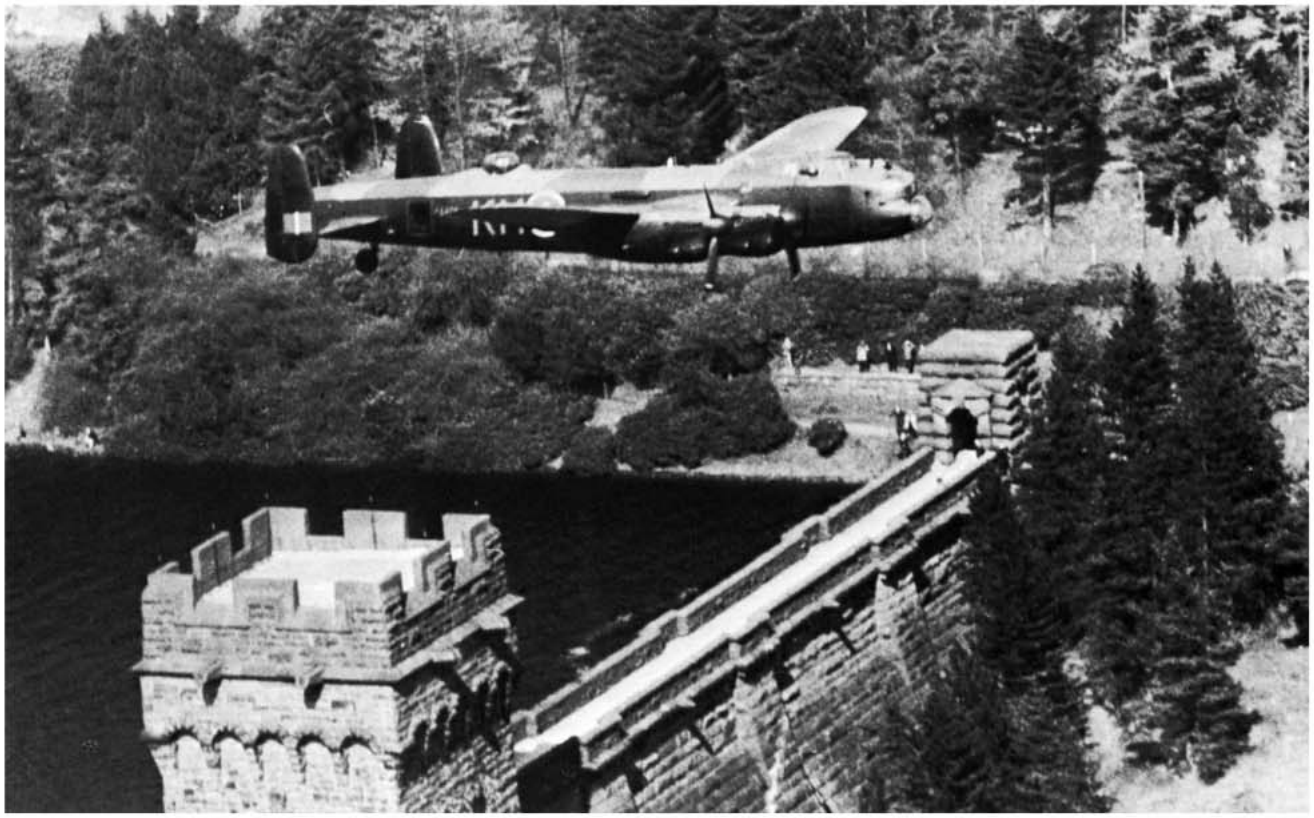
'The caption to the photo on page 37 notes the tank's unusual road wheels . . . they're really not so unusual considering the vehicle in question. The tank is one of the last of the Tiger I Ausf. Es produced. These late model Tigers were distinguished by two features: (1) a new type commander's cupola and (2) new running gear which employed steel rimmed wheels as opposed to the older rubber rimmed variant. This new running gear was used on the Tiger successor, Tiger II.

'Most of these late model Tigers saw action in the East but in mid-1944 the 2nd Panzer Division (Heer) received some Waffen SS



A 1:72 detailed model of the road bridge at Arnhem constructed by Frank Bosker is a recent edition to the museum display. Here an American TV crew film the 18-foot model in June 1978 for the 'Travelling Europe' series (UMA).

Major-General R. E. Urquhart, CB, DSO, raises the Airborne colours on the front lawn of the Hartenstein (UMA).



PA474 'City of Lincoln' over the Ladybower reservoir dam in Derbyshire's Peak District on May 16, 1977 (R. C. Riding).

Tiger companies to be used in breaking through the Allied front. The tank illustrated may well have belonged to one such unit.'

A similar point was made by Eric Clark of Southport, Lancashire over the same photograph. (Note: Wartime captions invariably call all German armoured vehicles Tiger tanks — American official picture captions like to exaggerate the error into King Tigers or Tiger Royals.

A nice postscript to the Arnhem story came from the commander of the operation, Major General R. E. Urquhart, in his letter to us in January 1974:

'May I send my congratulations on the number dealing with the Arnhem end of the Market Garden operation. There were several photographs, particularly those from German sources, which I had not seen before and I thought that the account was very accurate and well balanced.

'As the result of the Arnhem issue, I am having correspondence with the Curator of the Airborne Forces Museum over the pennant depicted in one of its photographs. This pennant is said to be in the Museum, but it is in fact hanging in my hall!'

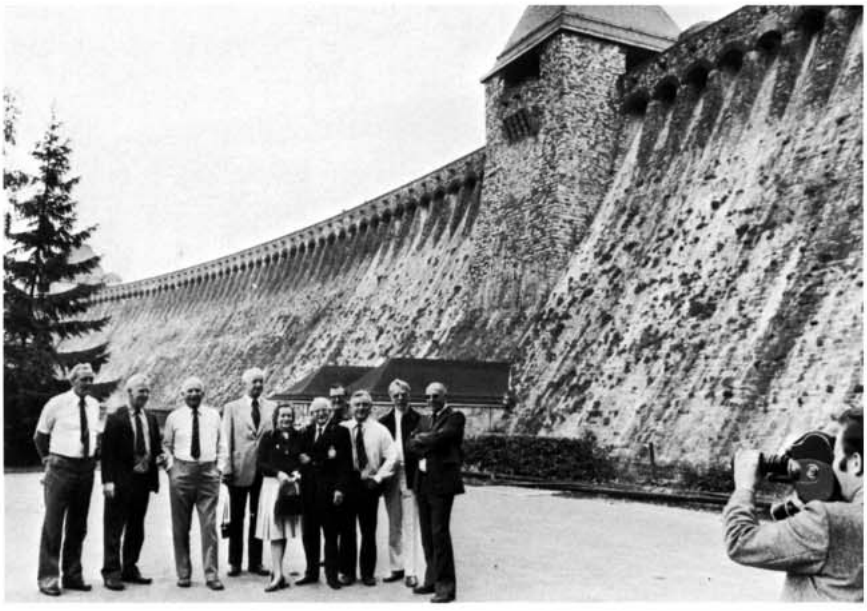
One of the issues to bring the most correspondence was No. 3 on the story of the RAF bombing raid on the Ruhr Dams. It seems the story continues to hold interest and at least five further books are currently under research. One by Mr. A. W. Cooper; a Dam-Buster Scrapbook by Mr. H. R. Humphries and Mr. Donald F. Thomas, Ontario, Canada is writing on the part played by No. 29 Canadian aircrew, who flew with 617 Squadron on May 17, 1943, as part of a Canadian Armed Forces Historical Branch publication on the RCAF in WWII. Another has been commissioned from John Warren of Portsmouth, England and Robert Sinclair of Kempton Park, South Africa is hoping to publish a 'Martin Middlebrook' on the raid.

In Holland, 'The Dutch Dam Buster' society has been formed specifically to promote the memory of No. 617 Squadron, RAF, during WWII. Interested readers should write to Herman B. van den Dool, Koogerwaard 2, Capelle a.d. IJssel, Holland.

In September 1976, the 617 Squadron Association held a reunion in Holland. Based at Amsterdam, they visited Gibson's grave on September 21 and the Moehne Dam on the 23rd. William Reid VC, Group Captain Cheshire VC and Group Captain Tait and Mrs. Eve Gibson were all in attendance. Of the 133 men on the original raid, 40 were still alive at that time of which nine made the trip to Holland.

On the 34th Anniversary of the raid in May 1977, the Royal Air Force staged a recreation in the presence of six former air crew from the raid. Sightseers crowded the roads leading to the Derwent dam in Derbyshire which had been used to train the crews in 1943. The RAF's last airworthy Lancaster 'B' for Baker, piloted by Squadron Leader Kenneth Jackson from RAF Scampton, made six low-level passes over the twin stone towers which had been used to simulate the towers on the German dams. Then, six months after the flypast, Richard Todd, who played Gibson in the 1955 film 'The Dambusters' (see issue No. 10), made his own nostalgic return to Scampton airfield as the guest of No. 617 Squadron.

That same month of October brought yet another sequel as three more of the practise bombs were recovered from the beach at Reculver (readers will remember we published details of their existence in issue No. 3 and four bombs were recovered by the Rayleigh branch of the BSAC as reported in issue No. 10). One of the latter bombs was used in a



Mrs. Eve Gibson with the nine ex-crew members visit the Moehne Dam on September 23, 1976 during the 617 Squadron Association reunion (Coventry Evening Telegraph).

Left: **A bomb-fragment given to Helmuth Euler in 1978.** *Above:* **In October 1977, Squadron Leader Edward Toat, Junior Technician Chris Pheasey and Warrant Officer Don McGuirk examine more of the concrete-filled practise bouncing bombs which were dropped at Reculver in 1943 (Press Association).**

fund raising venture in Blackpool on October 7-9, 1977 for the Leonard Cheshire Homes before being flown to Amsterdam for permanent exhibition. A second bomb was given to the RAF Museum and yet another is on display at Duxford airfield in Cambridgeshire.

In Germany Herr Helmuth Euler, whose own exhaustive research on the raid was published in *Als Deutschlands Damme brachen,* came across an interesting relic from the raid in 1978. An old school teacher gave him a piece of metal believed to be from one of the bouncing bombs which he had obtained from a German soldier who found it near the Moehne Dam after the attack.

The Battle of the Bulge has been one of our best selling issues and an interesting letter was received from Major R. Hardy, the Secretary of the Fraternelle des Anciens Combattants du 5me Batallion de Fusiliers, concerning the actions of the Belgian Fusiliers in the Ardennes conflict. The following are some extracts from his letter which should be read in conjunction with issue No. 4:

The 5th Battalion of Belgian Fusiliers took an active part in the Ardennes Battle from December 16, 1944 within the First American Army.

The photograph at the top of page 3 (the petrol dump on the Francorchamps road from Stavelot which was guarded by the Belgians) is the exact spot where soldiers from the 3rd Company of the 5th Battalion of Fusiliers were when the Germans began their attack. This Company was commanded by Captain Burniat (who died in 1975). The men in the platoon of the 3rd Company who were patrolling in Stavelot met some Germans (disguised as American soldiers) who were preparing to blow up (in reality to neutralise and prevent this) the bridge over the Ambleve River in Stavelot several hours before the arrival of Peiper's armoured vehicles. It must be admitted that these Germans, having made sure that the Belgian troops had taken them to be Americans, refrained from any hostile actions against the Belgians in order that they might carry on with their sabotage. It is not surprising that the Belgians were unable to foil their sabotage operations as American soldiers who went past also believed that the guard on the bridge belonged to their side. (see from the 5th line of the text on page 21).

We had two or three men posted on guard duty quite near to Baugnez on a minor road (indicated on your map on page 17) between Baugnez and Stavelot. They were there when the massacre at Baugnez (Malmedy) took place. The advance guard of Peiper's group sent some motorcyclists down this road and shots were exchanged between our men and these motorcyclists.

Our men withdrew in order to warn their commanders of the arrival of the Germans. It was they who gave the alarm at Stavelot as no one had suspected that the Germans were so near. If our men had been surprised and captured by the German advance guard, there is no doubt that they would have suffered the same fate as the victims of the US 285th Battalion on Sunday December 17, 1944. (pages 16 and 17).

When Peiper's Battle Group took Stavelot, the Belgian platoon of the 3rd Company were regrouped and received the order to withdraw by the old road from Stavelot to Francorchamps (mentioned as a 'minor road' on page 21). Just when the Belgians were crossing the railway at the exit to Stavelot and were getting ready to set fire to the first petrol dump they were joined by an American half-track whose occupant (it can only have been the American Major Solis) made them understand that he had run out of ammunition and that there were no Allied troops between them and the Germans. At that moment, the Belgians could see the German infantry coming down the opposite slope, behind Stavelot. Our men recall that an American officer later on gave them orders to stop setting fire to the dumps. This must have been Lieutenant-Colonel Frankland whom you mention in the last lines of the text on page 21.

Another very interesting comment on the Kampfgruppe Peiper, and its commander in particular, was sent to us by a French reader, Jean Paul Pallud, in the form of the short article which follows.

The story of Kampfgruppe Peiper was based largely on the account by Janice Holt Giles in *The Damned Engineers.* Two well-known pictures reproduced in issue No. 4 on page 16 were the subject of interesting study by Mrs. Giles. By close examination of the signpost, she identified the location of these pictures as Kaiserbaracke in the Wolfbusch forest, some 3km west of Born and 2.5km east of Recht and stated that the identity of the German smoking the cigar was Obersturmbannfuehrer Jochen Peiper. The editor of *After the Battle* accepted this statement as, in fact, the same photograph has been reproduced many times before as being Peiper.

The first conclusion — that of the location — is correct; however the identification is not. Neither are the pictures taken from a cine film, they are ordinary photographs. It seems that at least eight still photographs were taken at this place, four of which show the already-mentioned individual smoking the cigar. A cine film was also made at the same time and this clearly shows the photographer taking the still photographs. Examination of all this evidence allows us to clarify the scene.

When the two German cameramen arrived at the crossroads, the signpost was disarranged and it seems they rebuilt it before exposing their film. The movie film shows the photographer working on the signpost and removing the upper notice reading '202 ORD DEPOT FWD'. A rifle was then hung on the Malmedy sign to stop it tipping down to the left.

There are several pieces of evidence which exist to confirm that it is not Jochen Peiper in the photographs. The German magazine *Das Dritte Reich* having published one of these photographs with the usual 'Peiper en route to Malmedy' caption received a reply from Peiper himself: As an interested reader of your magazine I noted that you fell prey to an error. The picture in Edition 49, page 406 (Offensive in the Ardennes) does not show myself, but a commander of a small unit, whom I do not recognise. Even the British

Members of the Belgian 3rd Company, 5th Battalion Fusiliers photographed at La Sauveniere at Spa on December 19, 1944.

Above: **The controversial photograph, thoroughly researched by Jean Paul Pallud by viewing all the available photographic evidence. The sequence of frames from the cine film on the left shows the German still photographer repairing the Kaiserbaracke signpost with his rifle (IWM).**

Above: **Cine frame taken looking south on the N23. The signpost is just out of the picture to the left. The SS-Oberscharfuehrer is walking up the road and the Schwimmwagen with the SS-Unterscharfuehrer is just arriving. The white notice reads N23. The rear of a heavy mortar is seen disappearing right in the direction of Recht (IWM).**

Above left: **A cine frame showing a Tiger II loaded with German parachutists from Luftwaffe field units moving north to Pont. At the same time, a still photo** *(above right)* **was taken. The photographer was on the right of the cine cameraman in the ditch. The SS-Oberscharfuehrer is standing by the roadside but is hidden on the film by the trunk of the tree (IWM).**

Imperial War Museum is not infallible (you presumably obtained the photograph from their sources). Jochen Peiper

Also a careful examination of the two pictures published here show clearly that they cannot possibly portray the same man. Even if the general attitude seems similar some facial details are different notably the cleft in the chin — a distinctive feature of Peiper but absent on the man in the Schwimmwagen. The cine itself is rather revealing as the driver was filmed for much longer than his passenger. If this man was really the Kampfgruppe leader, surely the cameraman would have been more respectful to him!

The visual documents mentioned above also give some indications on the ranks of the different soldiers at the crossroads. The cine film shows that an Obersturmfuehrer sat in a Schwimmwagen (complete with a Panzerfaust) stopped near the signpost before it was repaired. Sometime later, photographs and the cine both show a second Schwimmwagen in front of the signpost now rebuilt. The driver seems to be a Rottenfuehrer and the man in the back an Oberscharfuehrer. The left collar patch of the front-seat passenger shows, rather faintly, one star identifying the wearer as an Unterscharfuehrer. Whether the collar patch has one or three stars is not absolutely clear but one thing is sure: it does not have the four stars arranged in a diamond shape that Peiper's must have had at this date.

The same photographic material allows an interesting study to be made of the evolution of the vehicles and men at the Kaiserbaracke crossroad. Two vehicles entered the road to Recht — an Sd.Kfz. 251 and a Steyr 1500A truck loaded with troops and trailing a heavy mortar (Granatwerfer 42). On the otherhand, the road to Pont was taken by at least six Sd.Kfz. 251s, two Schwimmwagens, one motorcycle and a Tiger II.

The mission of the southern part of Kampfgruppe Peiper was to be the second part of the pincers attack on Ligneuville. However, because the road was in a bad state, the southern column was late and the double envelopment failed. It seems very improbable that the southern group, well aware of its lateness, would spend time probing to Recht and stopping beside the road to be filmed. On December 18, Panzer Grenadiers of the 1st SS Panzer Division were at Kaiserbaracke: the main thrust was westward to Recht but the reconnaissance battalion was sent by Oberfuehrer Mohnke to follow the Kampfgruppe Peiper advance. This supposition fits the photographic evidence, that the pictures possibly show the reconnaissance battalion of the 1st SS Panzer Division on the morning of December 18 and not the Kampfgruppe Peiper on the previous afternoon.

Above: **Seconds later another cine frame shows the SS-Unterscharfuehrer, who has walked back a few yards from the stopped Schwimmwagen, talking to the SS-Oberscharfuehrer. An SdKfz 251 is turning left to Recht (IWM).** *Below:* **The tree which stood on the corner of the crossroads no longer stands.**

Below left: **The real Jochen Peiper after the award of the Ritterkreuz with Oakleaves and Swords on January 11, 1945.** *Below:* **The unnamed SS-Unterscharfuehrer pictured on the cine and stills.**

We were interested to receive a letter from Mr. Leonard Wilkins of Johnstone, Renfrewshire who, as a Trooper of HQ No. 3 Commando, landed on Yellow Beach at Berneval during the Dieppe raid (issue No. 5):

'My first point refers to the photograph at the foot of page 5 and the caption which states that we attacked the centre gulley. In actual fact some of us returned this way to the beach after most of our ammunition had been used but we actually left the beach by the easterly gulley towards St. Martin le Plage and then swung right handed towards the high ground facing across the village towards the battery. We lost one man, Pte. Hopkins, while crossing the shingle. He was killed by a shot from a sentry on the bridge which spans the western gulley leading directly to what is now named Place du Canadiens. I myself went some way inland towards the main road without seeing any Germans and after thirty minutes or so returned towards the village and joined the firing line on the open ridge (at that time) facing the battery. We carried out harassing fire for some time but as we had very little cover and casualties began to mount the order was eventually given to retire as the landing craft were returning to pick us up. The retiral took place down a path leading to a crossroads facing the centre gulley. There was a large white house here which is no longer standing and again as the opposition increased we evacuated in twos and threes down the slope to the beach. At that time the drop on to the shingle was only about six feet, the mines went off by trip wire and as far as I remember no-one was hurt. Since the war the cliff has been cut back and the staircase built. We re-crossed the beach and took shelter beneath the cliff just to the west of the west gulley, where we remained, about five of us with Captain Wills who was seriously wounded until capture.

'We were collected in front of the white house and then evacuated by transport to Eu and Criel-Plage and eventually back to Envermeu. Some of our officers were kept in the church but those in the picture on page 6 I think are Canadians. The rest of us were collected in the football field and then marched up hill to a factory under construction on the outskirts of St. Nicholas. Just after leaving Berneval we were strafed by our own aircraft and the leading vehicle a German ambulance without crosses was hit and two more of our lads were killed. There is a stone on the road to Eu about half-a-mile from the crossroads at St. Martin to commemorate this — it is marked in French 'Here died two Canadians'. I only saw one Canadian with our party, he was our radio link with the main body and as the CO's runner I was with him for some time. I think he was killed on the way from the ridge by a burst of light ack-ack.

'The second point concerns numbers, the figure of one hundred and twenty would be about right for the total landing, the five boat loads that actually touched down. One boat was burnt at the waters edge and when we came back to the beach I think there were three at anchor about half-a-mile out. Several of us tried to reach them but as we were under fire from the cliff it was difficult. Our party included two of the Phantom War Office Wireless Unit as well as a few Americans and several French sailors; as was natural they got off the mark pretty quick and I think made a good escape.

'The lone casualty mentioned at the end of the account is still a mystery. He was Trooper Rhodes and he stopped one in the wrist early on. I helped him put his field dressing on and saw that his revolver was secure in his left hand. When I last saw him he still had his dog-tags but some-one else must have removed them and I have the impression that he was interrogated by the Gestapo and left where he was found after his tags were removed. During the first few months in Lamsdorf I helped our RSM Mr. Beasley to answer some of the questions we received from the Red Cross with regard to identification and that was one of the last to come through.'

(Trooper Wilkins ended up Kriegsgefangener Nr. 26486 at Reigersfeld in Ober-Schlesien.)

The British offshore forts have come in the news twice since publication of our story in 1974 (issue No. 4). In July 1978 it was announced that the Tongue Sand Naval fort north of Margate was to be the subject of a study to design safer North Sea oil and gas platforms. Some of the latter non-concrete constructions are already showing heavy signs of wear, despite having been built some 25 years later than the Thames forts, and a consortium of 22 companies, co-ordinated by the Underwater Engineering Group of the Concrete Industry Research and Information Association had put up £300,000 for the research project.

Then in August 1978, Major Roy Bates' kingdom of Sealand on the Roughs Tower off Harwich was the target of a coup de etat by two Dutchmen and a German. The rebels landed and held Michael Bates captive for two days until Major Bates led a counter coup to rescue his son. The two Dutchmen were allowed to go but the German, Gernot Putz, was imprisoned on the tower on charges of treason because he held a 'Sealand' passport.

The publication of issue No. 6 on the V-weapons — in particular a paragraph on page 14 — aroused the interest of Major R. H. Hodges of the USAFR. This developed into a marathon exchange of letters between September 1976 and March 1977, his point being that he had evidence that a No. 617 Squadron 'Tallboy' had penetrated the thick concrete roof of the Siracourt bunker. No crater is evident on the roof today (see aerial photo, page 16) but Major Hodges' proof was irrefutable. He even arranged for ex-Eighth Air Force officer Bissell Alderman to write direct to us:

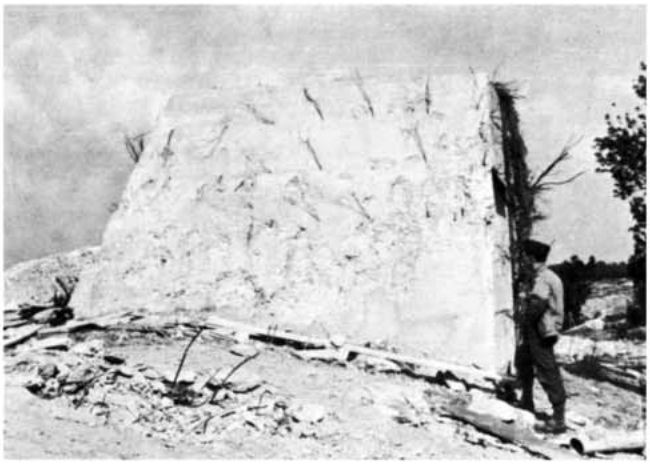
'Regarding Major R. H. Hodges letter to you of October 5, 1976, I am happy to confirm his statement that one particular bomb which made a direct hit on the Siracourt roof slab did actually perforate the slab. My colleague, Charles V. Kring, another Bomb and Fuze specialist at ORS. Hq. Eighth Air Force for three years, like myself, were on the Siracourt roof together and observed this complete perforation. We made this inspection on September 28, 1944, according to my personal diary, which happens to record that we also inspected the rocket sites at Wizernes and Watten the same day.

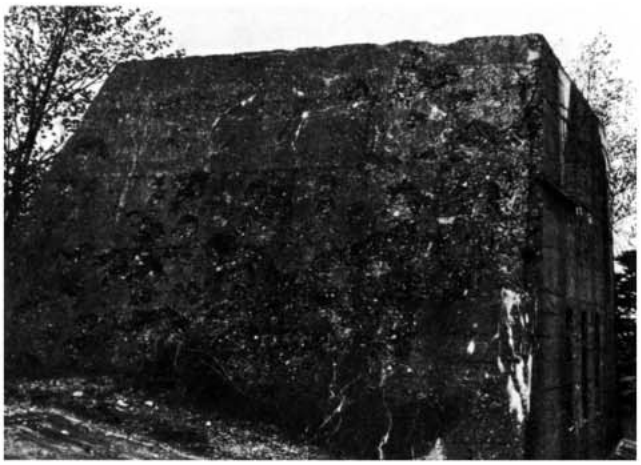
'We had neither of us ever seen Tallboy craters before. Being an architect and Mr. Kring's being a structural engineer, we were both duly impressed by the perforating of the 16-foot-thick reinforced concrete roof slab. Fortunately, as is now still clearly shown in my photographs, it landed almost on the center line of the long vault below. Had it struck over the thick foundation wall there might have been only a deep crater, or penetration, but no perforation.'

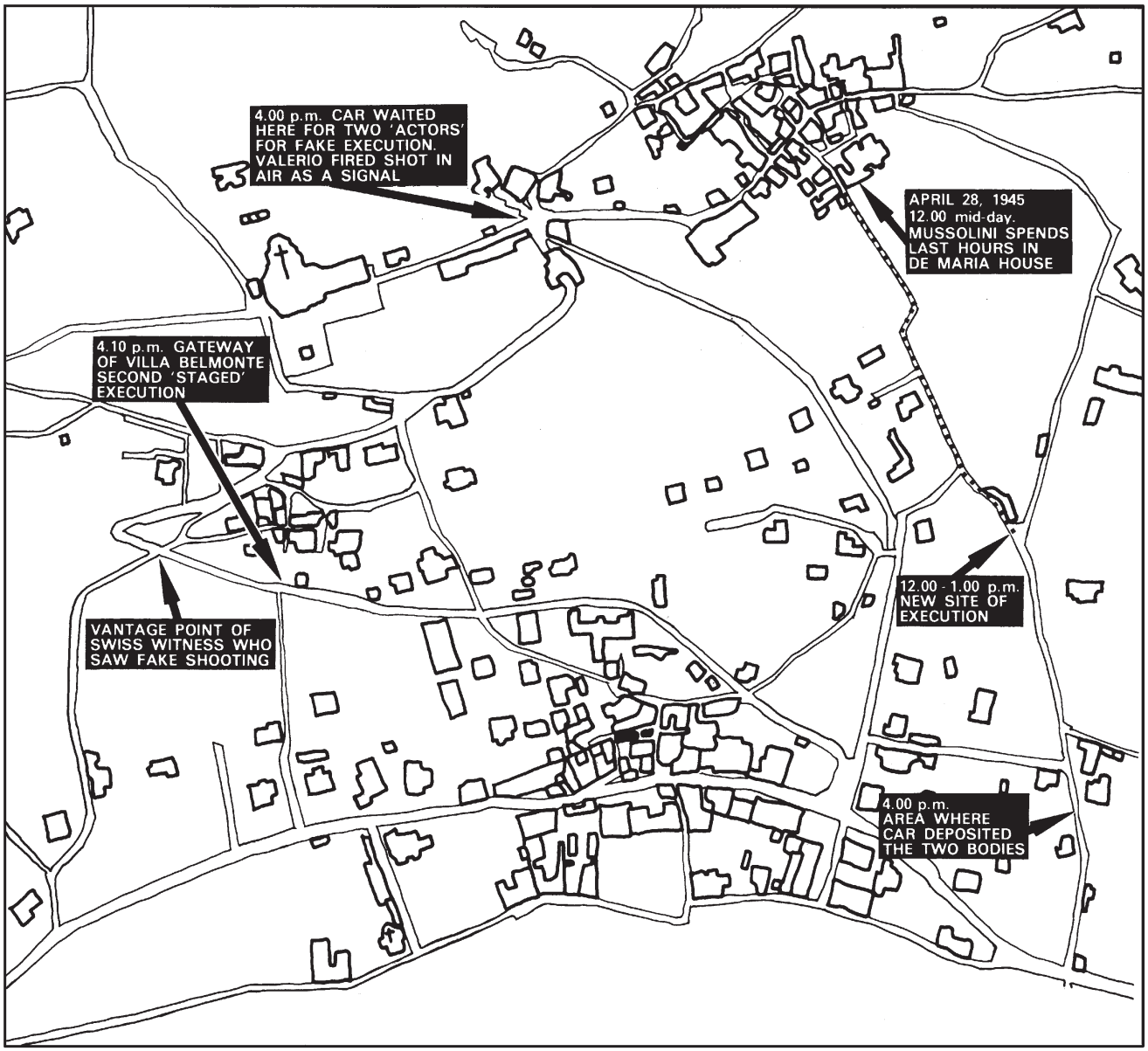
As there is no crater visible on the roof now, one can only assume the French authorities later expertly repaired this although why remains a mystery.

Above: **Charles V. Kring beside the Tallboy perforation in the 16-foot-thick reinforced concrete roof of the unfinished Siracourt V1 launch bunker. The crater is arrowed on the oblique reconnaissance photo below taken in 1944.**

Below left: **Bissell Alderman examines blast damage on the roof on September 28, 1944 still visible today,** *below right.*






4.00 p.m. CAR WAITED HERE FOR TWO 'ACTORS' FOR FAKE EXECUTION. VALERIO FIRED SHOT IN AIR AS A SIGNAL
APRIL 28, 1945 12.00 mid-day. MUSSOLINI SPENDS LAST HOURS IN DE MARIA HOUSE
4.10 p.m. GATEWAY OF VILLA BELMONTE SECOND 'STAGED' EXECUTION
12.00 - 1.00 p.m. NEW SITE OF EXECUTION
VANTAGE POINT OF SWISS WITNESS WHO SAW FAKE SHOOTING
4.00 p.m. AREA WHERE CAR DEPOSITED THE TWO BODIES

The map of Mezzegra illustrates Franco Bandini's conclusions on the true events preceding the death of Mussolini and his mistress. *Below:* **The path on which the shooting occurred.**

Another continuing controversy concerns the place of death of Mussolini (issue No. 7) and the identity of the actual assassins. Readers will remember that on page 22 we gave the view of Franco Bandini (an Italian author/historian) that the accepted 'facts' were in doubt.

Now with the publication of his book '*Vita E Morte Segreta di Mussolini*' (The Secret Life and Death of Mussolini), the result of twenty years constant research, Signore Bandini concludes that Mussolini and his mistress, Claretta Petacci, were not killed by Walter Audisio outside the Villa Belmonte. He now believes, through his exhaustive enquiries, that the execution was carried out by Alfredo Mordini (codename 'Riccardo') and Luigi Longo, now secretary of the Partito Communista Italiano (the Italian Communist Party). He says that a report on the execution, with the proviso that it not be made public for 50 years by any of the witnesses, lies in the files at PCI headquarters in Rome.

Another snippet of information not included in issue No. 7 which may interest readers concerns Mussolini's brain. A small green bottle labelled 'BM' containing six specimens arrived at the Military Pathology Institute in Washington in August 1945. These samples were obtained by Colonel Orpheus Bizzozzero after an order requesting same had been received by the US Military Governor of Milan, Colonel Charles Poletti. After examination, the samples were given the reference number 546,780 and stored in a refrigerator. A second pathological examination was later performed at the Federal Psychiatric Hospital at St. Elizabeth.

Following a 20-year legal battle by Donna Rachele, Mussolini's widow, the fragments were finally returned to Predappio and sealed in a small stone urn to avoid opening the funeral casket. On February 27, 1976 the urn, together with two hats and a sword, was stolen by thieves who broke into the family tomb. However the next day, a Saturday, an unidentified man left the stolen items in a confessional booth in the church of San Domenico in Bologna about 50 miles away.

The stone casket containing the brain fragments pictured following its recovery after the theft (Associated Press).

One of our faithful readers, Mr. J. W. Winckworth of Alderney, Channel Islands, wrote us an interesting note concerning a picture in issue No. 8:

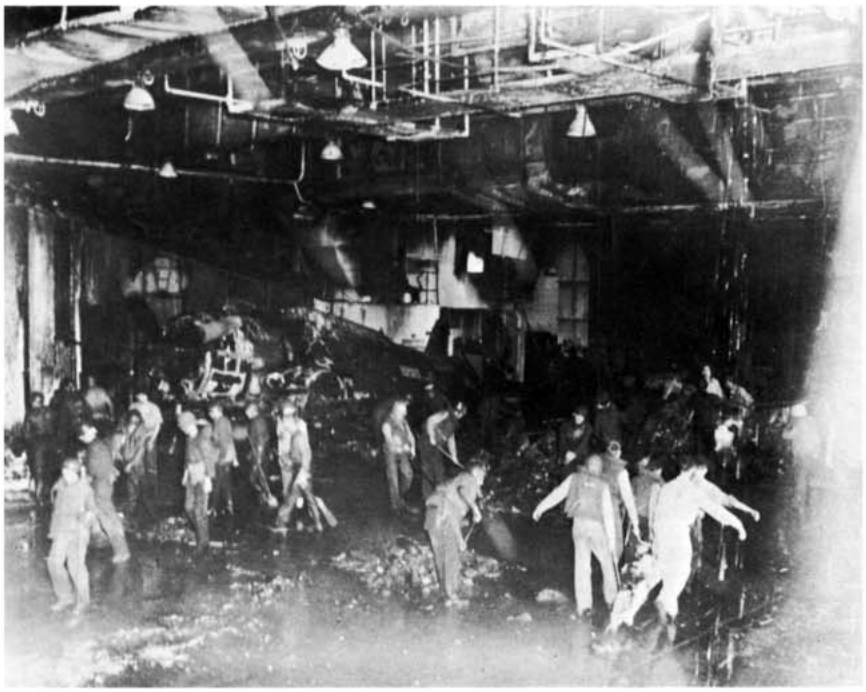
'In the top left-hand picture on page 8 showing the bridge at Conde sur Noireau, this was built by one of the Field Coys of 7 GHQ Troops, RE — I believe it was either the 84th or 184th Field Company. The officer in the foreground with his back to the camera is undoubtedly Lieutenant W. H. Green of HQ 7 GHQ Troops who was my particular friend — I was the Adjutant! Our HQ on that day was at Vassy after which we moved east to the Trun area and I can assure you that the photographs of the killing area between Trun and St. Lambert (on pages 29 and 30) give only a very mild idea of the vast area of corpses and wreckage.'

In a later letter, Mr. Winckworth gave us his experience concerning Riegel mines mentioned in the Overloon story (issue No. 9, page 46):

'These may not have been previously encountered by 6th Guards Tank Brigade but, in fact, 7 GHQ Troops, RE had considerable experience of them in Normandy in June/July 1944, I believe we were the first unit to disarm them. Examples were certainly sent to the Chief Engineer 21st Army Group who could not have failed to notify at least all RE units. They were infact absolute bastards to deal with as, even when not booby trapped, they were quite unpredictable in their behaviour and we lost quite a number of men while disarming them. When possible we used flails on them'.

In issue No. 12 we published a feature on various warships preserved in the United States. In June 1978, news came of the fight to preserve another American aircraft carrier, the *Intrepid* (CV-11). The ship had an interesting career after her launch in April 1943. Bombed on February 10, 1944, she had no sooner been back in action following repairs than a Japanese kamikaze pilot rammed her on October 30 killing ten men. Patched up she was hit by two further Japanese aircraft in quick succession on November 25. This time 65 men died. No sooner was she repaired than she was the target of yet another kamikaze attack in February 1945. A further attack on April 16 killed eight more crewmen.

In 1954 the ship went under a complete transformation which altered her WWII configuration and she was used twice to recover space capsules. She was put in reserve in 1974 and, providing the non-profit making organisation set up to save her can raise $5 million, the ship will be released for preservation. Readers feeling generous can send donations to Odysseys In Flight Inc, PO Box 229, Wantagh, NY, 11793.



Above: **Kamikazes hit the USS Intrepid on November 25, 1944.** *Below:* **One of the 65 men killed is being dragged away through the ruins of a hangar (US Navy).**

The latest news on the preservation of the last British aircraft carrier the ***Ark Royal*** is that she is to be moored in the Thames in the Greenwich area (her size of 50,786 tons would prevent her coming further upstream) to become a museum and a heliport — a rather novel idea. At the time of writing, she was first expected to go to Holland for a survey.

HMS Ark Royal constructed during the late WWII period returns to Devonport for the last time in December 1978.

Talking about ships an interesting coincidence concerns another historic ship of WWII. HMS *Undaunted* was an Ulster class destroyer built by Cammel Laird and launched on July 19, 1943 and played a special part in the Normandy landing as one of our readers, John Hunter of Wareham, Dorset, described in a letter in September 1974:

'HMS *Undaunted* took part in the initial bombardment and landings on June 6, 1944. It was after the bridgehead had been established, and whilst she was moving to take up a new position off the French coast, that she was called upon to take on board Eisenhower and Admiral Ramsay. During the dash back to Supreme Headquarters Southampton, General Eisenhower presented his personal flag (made for him on board the minelayer *Apollo*), duly autographed in indelible pencil dipped in whisky, to the ship. How do I know? I was just 18 at the time, and one of the original ship's company.'

We first saw the *Undaunted* still in Royal Navy service converted into a frigate, when she re-visited Normandy for the last time for the 30th Anniversary (issue No. 5 page 51) where she lay offshore during the celebrations.

When we visited Gibraltar in July 1977 we were sad to see her stripped of all her engines and fittings moored to the detached mole. She had been used as a target for gunnery practice and, we were told, had been patched up several times. Every day, from our bedroom at the Rock Hotel, we could see her rusty hulk awaiting an inglorious end. In weapons trials in December 1978 she was hit by a French-built Exocet missile and Seaslug II and Seacat missiles launched by the destroyer *Norfolk*. Unable to take any further punishment, the 35-year-old vessel was towed 300 miles south-west of the Rock for the coup de grace. This was delivered by torpedoes from the submarine *Swiftsure* in January 1979; now the *Undaunted* lies at the bottom of the Atlantic, a sad end to a brave ship.

The Himmler suicide story in issue 14 led to the sequel in *After the Battle* No. 17 One further interesting letter came subsequently from Colonel E. C. Browne, the Senior Dental Officer in the British Second Army who donated the death mask (No. 14, page 35) to the Royal Army Dental Corps Museum at Aldershot:

'I was the ADDS, at Second Army Headquarters, (i.e. Senior Dental Officer, Second Army) on the staff of Brigadier Glyn Hughes, DDMS, Second Army HQ, (i.e. Senior Medical Officer, Second Army).

'In the evening of May 24, 1945, Brigadier Glyn Hughes instructed me to make a dental examination, under extreme secrecy, of a certain important cadaver at 31a Uelzener Strasse, Lueneberg. (Our HQ was sited at Lueneberg at the time). Next morning I walked over to the address given and assessed the situation, confirming my guess that rumours were right and that the body was that of Himmler. I decided to make a detailed record of the dental state and, further, to make models of the teeth and, if possible, to take an impression for a death-mask. My appointment being administrative, I had no dental equipment of my own and would also need assistance in the work. I decided to obtain both from the recently arrived L of C General Hospital. I returned to 31a accompanied by Major G. Attkins, of my Corps, (the Hospital Dental Officer), and the necessary dental equipment and materials. When we arrived I found that the Hospital Pathologist, (Captain Bond, RAMC) had started a surface examination of the cadaver. He and I were able to work at the same time and, assisted by Major Attkins, I charted the dentition (drawn freehand by me and then took impressions of the upper and lower teeth. I then took a death mask impression in plaster of Paris, instructing Major Attkins to tell his dental mechanic to cast duplicate models of the dental arches and triplicates of the death mask. When I took delivery of the models and mask I ordered the original impressions to be destroyed in order to avoid the multiplication of models. I sent one copy of the death mask and one set of dentition models to HQ, SHAEF (Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force) at Reims; one mask was given to the senior Provost Officer, Second Army, for presentation to Scotland Yard and the third, with the dental models, was kept by me and, at a later date, sent to the RADC Museum, Aldershot. I signed all models to authenticate them.

'Besides the death mask, you may have seen at the RADC Museum, a copy of my report and that of Captain Bond, RAMC, together with upper and lower models of the teeth, accompanied by a photograph of the house, 31a Uelzenerstrasse. Captain Bond (who died recently), retained Himmler's spectacles as a memento.'

(We have attempted to contact Mrs. Bond but have not had any success at the time of going to press.)

The empty hulk of HMS Undaunted used for target practise is towed out to sea from Gibraltar before the torpedo execution in January 1979.

Although Colonel Browne ordered the master mould of Himmler's death-mask to be destroyed, nevertheless it is on show today (albeit cracked) at the Royal Army Dental Corps Museum at Aldershot.

Kenneth Parkes wrote to us in October 1978 to give us more information on Japanese War Graves:

'I noticed on page 53 of issue 14 that you stated that the tomb for the Deceased Soldier in Tokyo at the Yasukuni Shrine can be regarded as a parallel to the Unknown Soldier of the Western world. You then mention other Japanese tombs of war dead in various other locations. However you do not in fact mention the tomb in Kyoto, Japan's previous capital, which stands under a huge statue of Buddha near the Higashi Otani temple. Here stands the tomb of 'The World's Unknown Soldier' and numerous drawers containing 'Individual Names of Allied Personnel who Perished under Japanese jurisdiction during World War II'

The inscription on the marble tombstone translates as follows:-

IN MEMORIAM
THE WORLDS UNKNOWN SOLDIER
KILLED IN
WORLD WAR II

All honour to him, friend or foe
Who fought and died for his country!

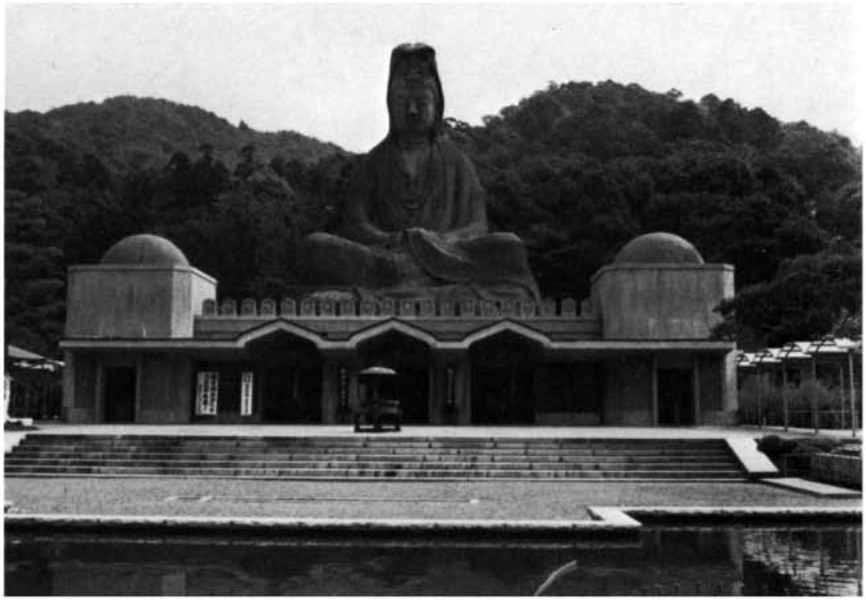
May the tragedy of his supreme
Sacrifice bring to us, the living,
Enlightenment and inspiration;
Fill us with ever-mounting zeal
For the all-compelling quest of peace,
World peace and universal brotherhood.

Also in issue No. 14 was the story on Britain's invasion defences. Readers interested in fixed defences in Great Britain will be interested to learn of the United Kingdom Fortifications Club which makes detailed studies and visits mostly in southern England. Peter D. Cobb is secretary of the lively Solent branch and can be contacted at 4, Mablethorpe Road, Portsmouth PO6 4LJ. Another body founded in 1975 for readers with similar interests is the Fortress Study Group. For details write to Secretary at 24 Walters Road, Hoo, Rochester, Kent, ME9 9JR.

Mr. S. W. Priest wrote to us in February 1977 concerning the Le Paradis massacre in Issue No. 15:

'After the 1975 pilgrimage of the Dunkirk Veterans Association, I became convinced that Bill O'Callaghan (one of the two survivors) would not be alive for the 1976 visit. Accordingly my wife and I invited him to accompany us on a visit to the Le Paradis area in late August of 1975. We arrived at Victor's farm rather late only to find that he was ill in La Cite Hospital, Lille. Nevertheless he was made welcome by the Duquenne-Creton family . . . but we all realised he would not see any of his Le Paradis friends again. He died ten weeks later.

'The wall tablet, unveiled in 1970, had begun to show signs of wear by 1972 and Bill was most distressed to note its condition at the September meeting of the Norfolk and Norwich Branch of the DVA. I proposed that a new memorial be erected near the British Cemetery in Le Paradis, this being Bill's wish.'



The tomb of the World's Unknown Soldier at Kyoto, Japan.

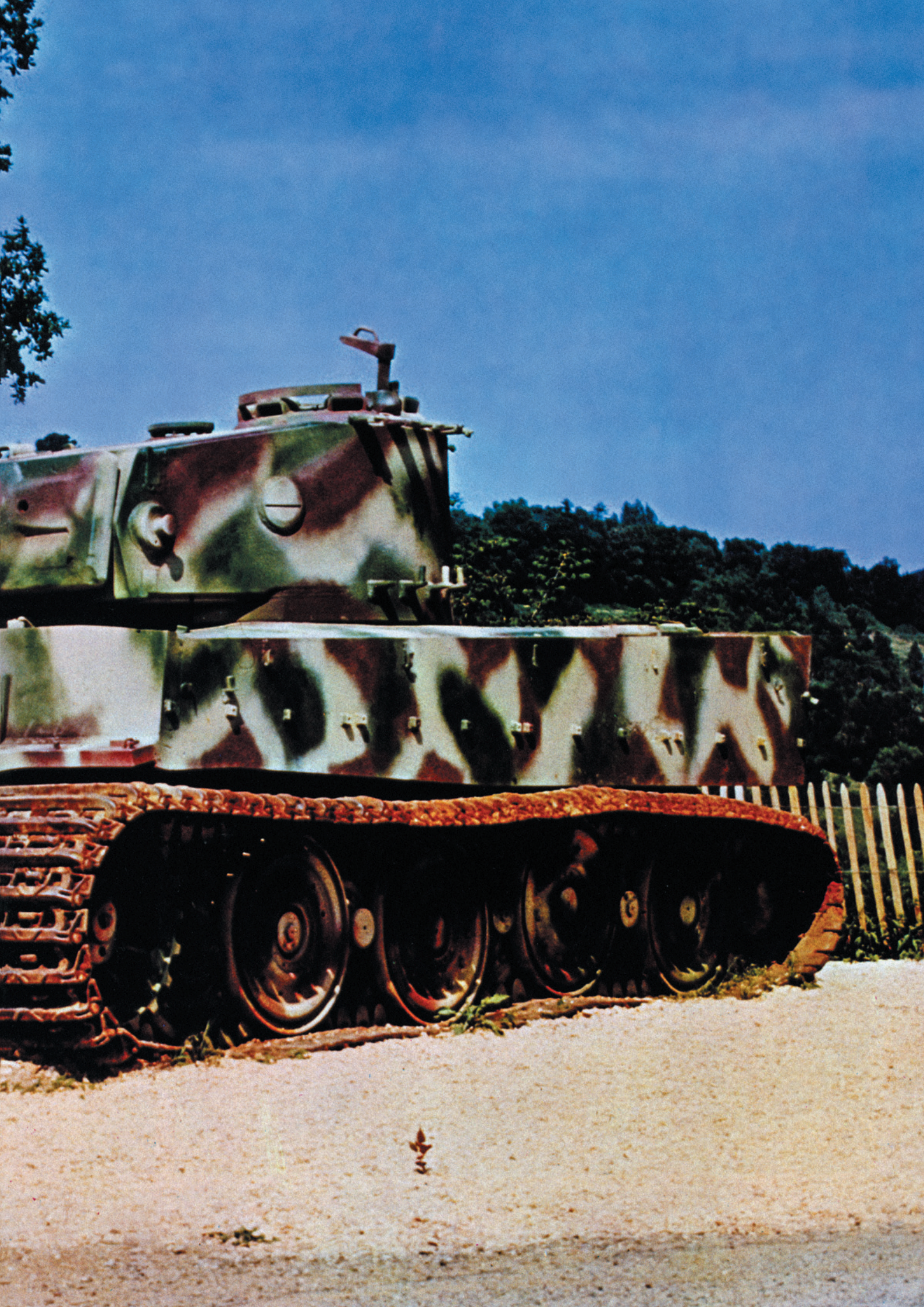
Henry Wills was author of our feature on British invasion defences in issue No. 14. He is seen here being interviewed by Bernard Falk for BBC Nationwide in 1974 and has now been chosen as one of the six finalists for his work on WWII defences in the British Archaeological Awards for 1979. The winner will be announced in November and televised in the BBC Chronicle series.

We are pleased to report that on May 29, 1978, Madame Duquenne-Creton-Pauline unveiled the new memorial to the members of the British Expeditionary Force massacred at Le Paradis which had been erected on a site in the village churchyard provided by the commune. The Blessing and Dedication was given by Reverend Leslie Aitkin, MBE, author of *Massacre on the Road to Dunkirk* which details another atrocity against British Forces during May 1940 at Wormhout. The book is the results of three years research and fully details the fighting which led up to the killings although the actual perpetrators were never brought to justice by the War Crimes Investigation Unit. Because of this, the publisher insisted on the deletion of some German names from the text — to the annoyance of at least two of our readers who telephoned us on the matter.

The Churchill AVRE extracted after much difficulty at Graye-sur-Mer (No. 15) was subsequently restored by the French Army workshops in Caen. It was returned to the exit road behind the beach and set up on a concrete plinth as a permanent memorial and unveiled on October 15/16, 1977. Many interesting items had been recovered from the interior of the tank the previous year and the report of the Armed Forces Food Chemist on one of the tins of corned beef sent for analysis makes interesting reading:

Two samples of Corned Beef salvaged from a tank on the Normandy Beaches have been received for examination from 79 Supply Depot Hohne. The cans were the normal twelve ounce tapered variety which, apart from a slight seaming difference are the type currently issued for Service use.

The cans were, as expected rusted externally but this was confined to the can surfaces and there had been no penetration. In view of their antecedents the cans were in



Bill Dunn and Bill Hawkins beside their restored Churchill AVRE at Graye-sur-Mer prior to its unveiling in October 1977.

remarkably good condition. The ends were slighty distended and could be described as 'soft swells' but no positive pressure was recorded.

The cans were coded as follows:-
Smaller end: URUGUAY
Larger end: N II R

The code could not be related to a packing date.

On turnout the external surfaces of the meat had been stained due to chemical action at the interfaces and the sample had a 'metallic' odour associated with long storage. The meat was free from mould and had a wholesome odour. The fat was pale yellow due to prolonged chemical deterioration. On slicing the meat had a good fresh red colour and it was noted that the meat was 'chunky' compared with current samples which are more finely compressed. A small portion of the lean meat was tasted and found to be wholesome but the rancidity of the fat made the overall unpalatable.

It is reported from Laboratory of the Government Chemist that parts of the meat, especially at the surfaces, exceeded the tin and lead limits but this is to be expected. The meat has been reported to be completely sterile. In view of the history of the samples they are in a remarkably good condition which is a great credit to the skill of the canning factory.

Another preservation story, that of the Panther tank unearthed in a south-London scrapyard, described in issue No. 20, brought an interesting follow-up from Corporal P. Breakspear of the 17/21 Lancers at Bovington Camp, Dorset:

'As to why the ten vehicles were actually built by REME is still a mystery but they were shipped to the island of Putloss (the spelling may be wrong as I can't find it on the map) in the Friesian Islands in either late '45 or early '46. There they underwent field trials with an unnamed British Army unit. The reason for and the results of these trials are again lost. That seems to be the end of the story until the early fifties. In 1950, the one in the magazine finished up at the scrapyard via a WD sale. Another was discovered at the Army Fighting Vehicle Research and Development Establishment (FVRDE) at Chatham (now called MVEE). This vehicle was given to the Bovington Tank Museum in 1952 and is on show there today.'

Mr. A. W. Cooper (author of one of the forthcoming Dambuster books) wrote to tell us of an interesting tailpiece concerning Winston Churchill's visit to the Rhine (No. 16 page 28):

'During the course of my search I have come into contact with an ex-Flight Lieutenant Sidney Hobday who won the DFC for the raid on the Eder Dam (his aircraft flown by Knight who won the DSO actually breached the Eder Dam) Well, on the flight to Venlo on March 23, 1945 the navigator of the Dakota No. 979 was one and the same Sidney Hobday of the Dams raid.

'It is entered in his log book as Northolt/ Venlo 2hrs 10min Right Hon. Winston Churchill, Sir Alan Brooke CIGS and they ferried them from Venlo to Brussels and back between the 23rd and the 26th when they returned to Northolt, the journey taking 2hr 20min.

'He has a Gilder note signed by Churchill also a five-inch stub of Churchill's cigar as souvenir of the trip.'

Flight Lieutenant P. C. Dyer, the Gibraltar aviation expert, added a little light to the mystery of the well-publicised rumour that the Rock had been severed from Spain by a huge water-filled trench (Issue No. 21):

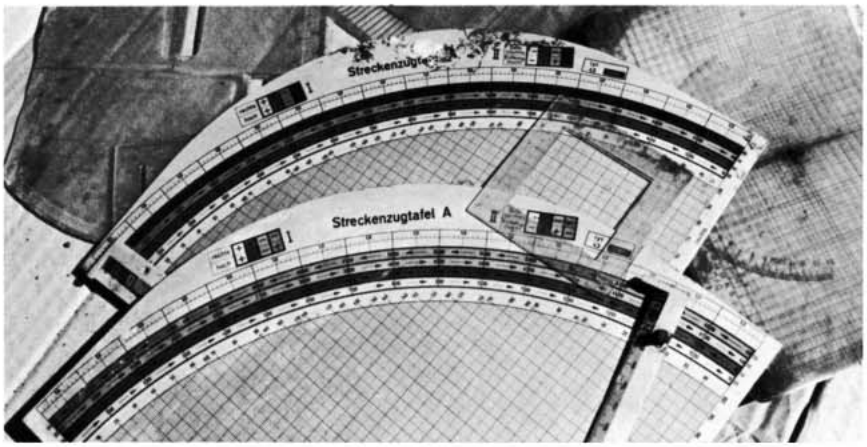
'The trench which you refer to on page 35 was probably a reference to the anti-tank ditch which was dug by the Scottish Regiment responsible for the airfield defence. It was, I think, the Black Watch and they nicknamed it the 'Caledonian Canal' and it is shown as such on some wartime maps. It ran from Eastern Beach south of the airfield roughly to where the Devils Tower stood. No doubt some boasting Jock was overheard in a pub and this is how the impression arose.'

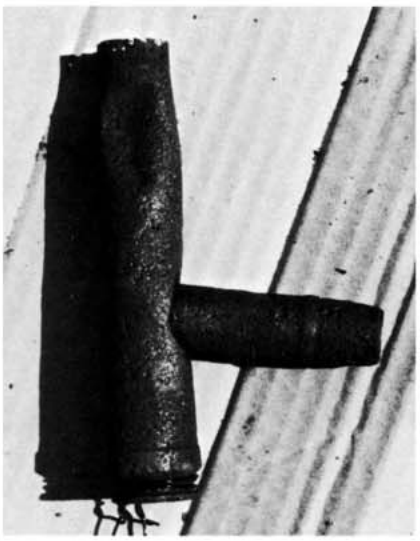
The article on the Oorlogsmuseum (Issue No. 5) run by Monsieur C. M. A. Rossell in Ostend interested many readers. Unfortunately the museum had to be closed in September 1976 and much of the collection sold. (Subsequent reprints of *After the Battle* No. 5 have had a substitute article included on Hermann Goering's Mercedes-Benz). We understand that Mr. Rossell still sells militaria in the Ostend market place and has his shop on the square.

On the other hand, another museum has since opened, the one long-planned by M. Colle on the site of the German radar station at Pourville near Dieppe (issue No. 5, pages 16-17).

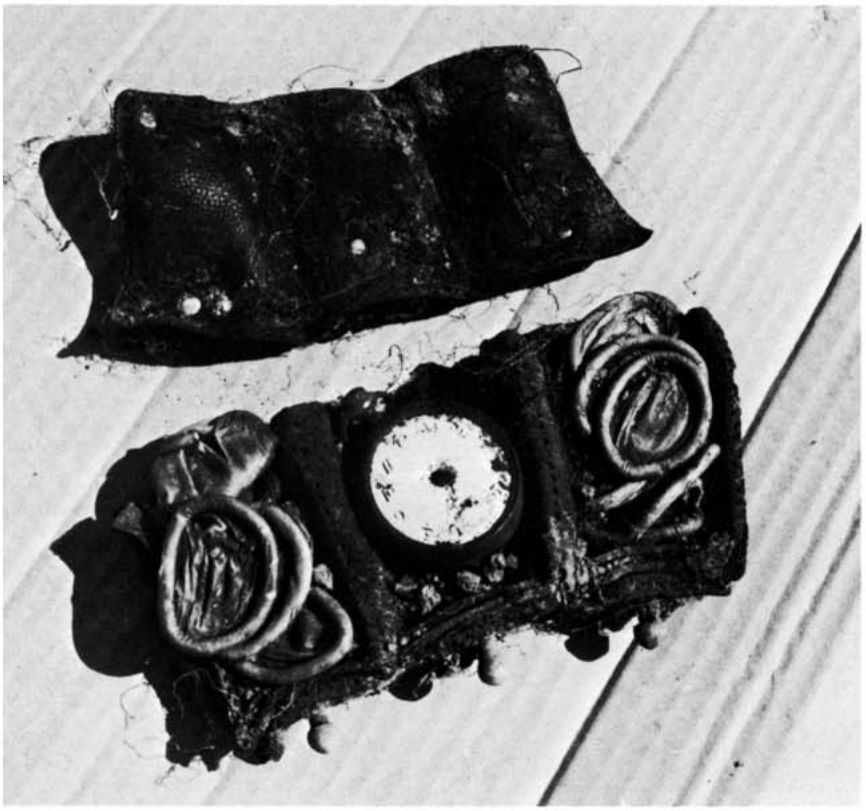
The interest of our readers in war relics was amply confirmed by the continuing flow of requests for the address of Alain Roudeix, the formidable character/collector at Vimoutiers (see issue No. 8) and fan letters for him have come from as far away as Hawaii. One Irish reader requesting his address, reminded us that we said German helmets were 'two a franc'. A Dutch schoolboy wrote to ask us to purchase a helmet for him from M. Roudeix for one franc! M. Roudeix still spends much of his time uncovering relics from the 1944 campaign and recently discovered the location of one of the huge pits dug to dispose of unwanted war material. Naturally he is keeping the spot a secret but he has already removed some interesting items including a complete German sidecar in surprisingly good condition. We have included photographs of some other recent finds.

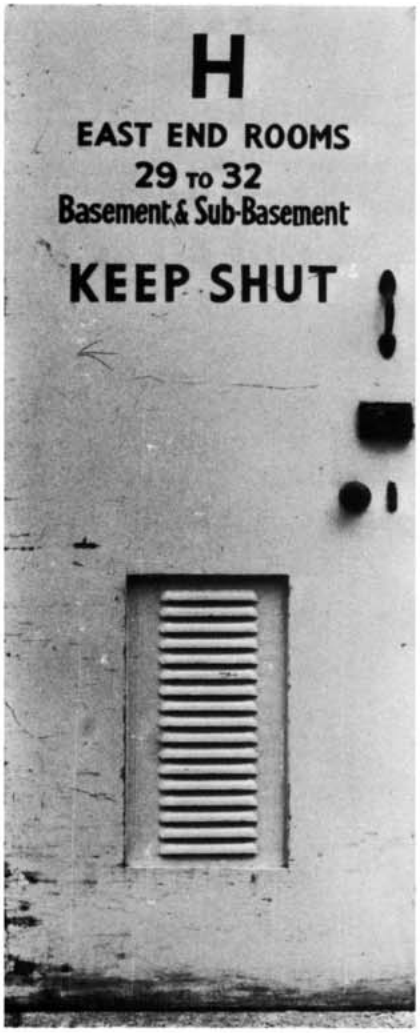
M-26 General Pershing tank named after Lieutenant Edwin V. Loustalot, first US soldier killed in France during WWII (on August 19, 1942 at Berneval during the Dieppe raid), at M. Colle's military museum at Pourville.





Latest 'objects de la guerre' unearthed by Alain Roudeix. Most are self-explanatory especially that below. When I commented to our German translator, Gerd Gerhard, on the Teutonic efficiency of including a watch to time the proceedings he commented: 'Note the state of preservation of the ''Ersatz'' rubber — clock appears to have ''no hands'' for or against your caption relating to efficiency!'





Corporal Dobson asked us what happened to the lockplate from the Berghof garage . . . answer above. *Left:* **The door to our showroom once formed the entrance to the Cabinet War Rooms (issue No. 1).**

Several people have asked us what happens to the things we find in our travels. It always seems a shame to leave interesting items lying about where vandals or scrap dealers may have little compunction in destroying a piece of history so our Land-Rover has been known to disgorge an assortment of bullet-scarred road signs, railway ticket counters, sentry boxes and the like when it arrives back in the UK. For a time these relics had no permanent home but, in the course of extensions being carried out at our parent printing press at Stratford in East London, provision was made to incorporate the more interesting items in our showroom. Readers are most welcome to come and view these during office hours.

One of the items we have rescued from oblivion is one of the original railway sleepers from the Remagen bridge. When we first visited the area we spotted the huge nine-foot monster at the bottom of the crater blown in in the western embankment. Although I struggled with my son for half-an-hour to retrieve the sleeper, its water-sodden weight defied our attempts to pull it up the muddy slope. A month or so later we diverted from another trip (only a slight 100 miles or so!) to return to the bridge. Armed with the necessary equipment — three men and a rope — we triumphantly flung the piece of tree-trunk on our roof rack and returned with our prize.

In March 1978, speaking in Germany at the ceremony held on the 33rd Anniversary of the capture of the bridge, General Otto Maximilian Hitzfeld, who had commanded troops west of the Rhine at the time, gave an hour-long speech and declared that the Allied capture of the Remagen Bridge was 'a military catastrophe which should never have happened to a German Army'.

We feel that the remains of the bridge piers, one of the few significant war ruins existing in Germany today, have such an importance that they should be preserved. We were concerned to see how the approach embankment has slowly been removed over the past ten years and were therefore very pleased when Remagen's Burgomeister, Herr Hans-Peter Kuerten, speaking at the same ceremony, announced plans to build a memorial museum by the old bridge piers financed by the sale of stone bridge fragments at DM 50 each.

Another exhibit in our display is a German helmet given to us by M. Roudeix which he had recovered from the slopes of Mont Ormel in 1948. This still bore the original camouflage paint and also the trace of a name CZER...SKY. Through the German War Graves Commission in Kassel we traced the former owner as Obergefreite Franz Czerwinsky who was killed in July 1944 and now lies buried in Grave 235 in Block 42 of the Soldatenfriedhof at La Cambe in Normandy, and in May 1979 we took the helmet back to photograph it on his grave.

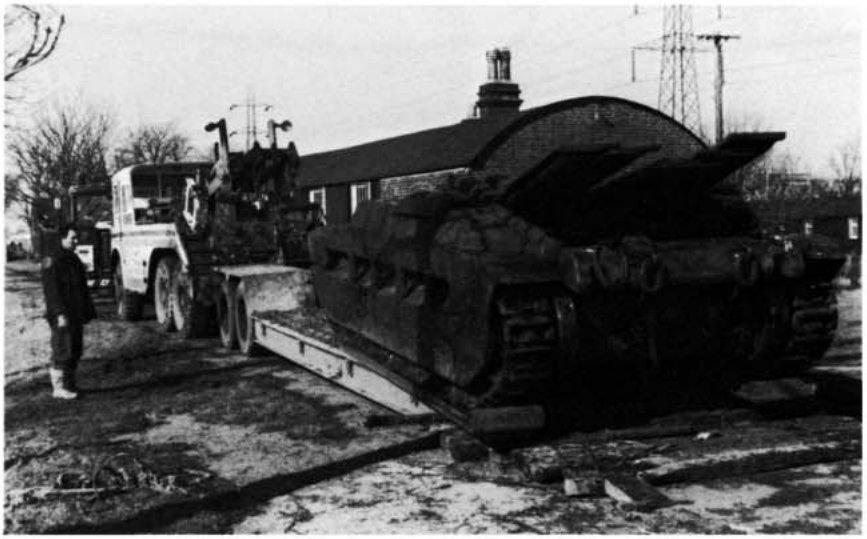
We like our readers to be able to share our discoveries but the publication of the exact location of some relics has resulted in them subsequently being removed. The Matilda tank on Rainham marshes (back cover No. 6) is a typical example. Many readers wrote for more details but when we checked its current condition for this report, all we found was an empty circle of mud. Subsequent investigation revealed that it had been removed by a private military vehicle collector in February 1978. The disused range where the tank was lying was recently sold to the Greater London Council for development and, before the Ministry of Defence relinquished control, Army ordnance experts made a complete search of the area to clear it of any unexploded ammunition or missiles. The material that was found was put inside the Matilda and destroyed by firing an explosive charge which, unfortunately, blew the turret off the tank. The collector (who wishes to remain anonymous) who removed the tank, found the turret lying nearby when he inspected the site.

The recovery operation took a full four days. The first day consisted of recovering the turret and jacking up and placing a skid under one track of the tank. The next was taken up by endlessly laying down timber on the soft, marshy ground and jacking, adding more timber and more jacks until a second skid could be inserted under the other track.

Although it was hoped that the tank could now be pulled by a tractor, this was just not to be and a large AEC 6x6 wrecker had to be brought in despite dire warnings of vehicles sinking into the marsh. The tractor was retained in case of emergency but the wrecker easily winched the 26-ton Matilda straight out although a further full day was required to pull it the half-mile or so to the nearest hard surface. The last day was spent loading and transporting from Rainham.

Another example of what publicity can do is illustrated by the Tiger tank at Vimoutiers. In 1974 this could be seen in its original state at the side of the road and was a unique war relic which we would have much preferred to remain in situ. However, being the subject of our front cover for No. 8, the local French authorities felt that visitors would not like to see it derelict — especially with the forthcoming Military Vehicle Conservation Group tour to Falaise in August 1975. They thought it would look as if local people did not care about its future and so Alain Roudeix was approached to extract the tank and set it up nearby suitably painted and restored — an admirable motive but so destroying its uniqueness.

Monty's TAC HQ flag hangs in a corner of the church at Englishcombe. A plaque records its presentation in 1947.



Above: **After three days' effort, the Matilda reaches solid ground at last.**

Above: **Recovery of the Tiger at Vimoutiers in May 1975. It took Alain Roudeix just two hours to pull the tank, from which he had removed the turret, onto the road.**

It is always interesting to learn the whereabouts of items connected with stories we have published and Mr. Roger Geach kindly sent us a photo and wrote to tell us that he has a Distinguished Flying Medal and three WWII medals in his collection which once belonged to Louis Zalsberg, crew member on Sikorski's fatal Liberator.

We discovered that the Union Jack which flew over Field-Marshal Montgomery's TAC HQ near Wendisch Evern on Lueneberg Heath now hangs in the tiny village church of Englishcombe near Bath. It was given to the parish church on January 21, 1947.

Another relic came to light with the publication of issue No. 9 which included the story of Hitler's imprisonment in Landsberg prison. On page 52 I quoted that 'over the years Hitler's cell had become a shrine, the window was marked with a wreath and swastika flag and a copy of Mein Kampf lay on the table. Over the door was a bronze plaque . . . this plaque quickly disappeared to souvenir hunters.'

On November 19, 1975 we received the following letter from the Kentucky Military Museum in Frankfort, USA:

'Reference issue No. 9, enclosed is a picture of the plaque which graced Hitler's cell. It is now the property of the museum having been given by Colonel Donovan P. Yevell, CO of the 411th Infantry Regiment, 103rd Division'.

The plaque, removed in 1945 from Hitler's prison cell at Landsberg, turned out to be now on display in the United States in the Kentucky Military Museum.

Where is the Blutfahne today, we ask? Pictured at a pre-war November 9 parade.

Enclosed with the letter was a photocopy of Colonel Yevell's wartime diary for April 29, 1945: 'Yesterday I got the biggest trophy of the war so far — the plaque from over the door of Hitler's cell in the prison at Landsberg! I also got the sacred Nazi banner from the same cell (see photo on page 52 of No. 9) —both go with me in my trailer.'

The museum said they had no knowledge of the location of the banner and, as the Colonel died in 1953, no further information is forthcoming on this. However, Colonel Yevell's words 'sacred banner' lead us to question the current whereabouts of the supreme Nazi souvenir of all — the so-called Blutfahne or Blood Flag used at all important ceremonies. The flag was the one which had been carried in the abortive Munich putsch and was reputedly blood-stained and bullet-holed. Before the war, it was usually kept at the Brown House in Munich. I wonder if some GI liberated it or whether some diehard Nazi carried it to safety and now tends it lovingly under his bed!

One wartime banner being returned to its former owners was the flag of the Alte Kamaraden (a German parallel to the British Legion) of Stade in north Germany. The flag was found in the Rathaus in Stade and brought back to Berwick at the end of the war by Colonel F. M. V. Tregear who commanded the 6th Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers in 1945. For thirty years the ornate flag hung in the Regimental Museum until Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. McQ. Johnston, KOSB, Assistant British Military Attache in

Bonn, handed it back to the Old Comrades in Stade in 1977, the 66th anniversary of the founding of their Kameradschaft. (Ironically, the KOSB served as part of the Hanoverian Army throughout the Seven Years War (1756-63) and to this day the regiment still wear roses in their bonnets each year on Minden Day — August 1).

In February 1979, a most poignant and moving letter, together with a photograph and a paratroop badge, was received from Mrs. Joan Barham of Littlehampton, Sussex and I feel it makes a fitting end to this round-up of our six years' work. Mrs. Barham has been one of our subscribers from the beginning and wrote to us offering us two personal mementos she had treasured since the war:

'I send you these cherished items with pleasure having no one now to pass them on to. My sweetheart died, a dream gone.

'The photograph was taken in the woods of Benham House, Benham Park near Newbury, Berkshire, the house being the headquarters. Over the road from the park gates a little lane ran up past the church into the hamlet of Stockeross where many paras were billeted.

'These young men were welcomed in our village. They were nice, clean and polite and they loved our village and said, after being away on 'manuvers' it was like coming home. Many of those villagers are dead and, like me, mould away. Strangers have taken their place, for it was a village with very few children in those days.

'How dreary it was going back there last year; the church was locked and no one about to open up. No 'honey tanks' with jeeps pelting by or a cheerfull atmosphere. I went into the pub for a drink . . . no one there but me — and my memory.

'They went away early in a morning — on a large tent facing the road was a sign in big letters, it said 'Goodbye all'. I hope the writers returned to the States safely. I hope too, to see this photo in an *After the Battle* issue sometime so I shall still have it, so to speak; also some of your readers 'over there' would like to see themselves again as we all do, don't we?

'I have never cleaned the badge; for me it would lose its charm. Time goes by for romance can never be recalled and memories get dim with the fading of the years.'

THE LADY BE GOOD

Mission 109

By April 1943, Allied forces controlled almost all of North Africa and only a small Axis pocket remained to be eliminated in northern Tunisia. All along the shoreline, desert airstrips provided vital bases for extending the war effort against southern Europe especially Sicily and Italy.

The airfield at Soluch (or Qaryat Suluq to give it its correct present-day Arabic name) lay some thirty miles south of Bengazi (Banghazi), 300 miles west of the Egyptian-Libyan frontier. It was the base for the 376th Bomb Group, part of the Ninth 'Desert' Air Force, equipped with four-engined B-24 Liberators.

On April 4 a mission was planned for a high level attack on Naples harbour, 700 miles to the north-west, to be delivered at sunset. Twenty-five aircraft were scheduled to make the attack and, for one particular Liberator, serial No. 41-24301, coded No. 64 of the 514th Squadron, newly arrived from the United States, it was to be her first and last mission. She had been named by the crew who brought her over the *Lady Be Good.*

Her nine-man crew for the Naples mission were also the newest crew in the squadron and this was to be their first operation. In the command pilot's seat was Lieutenant William J. Hatton who had flown his first combat operation only two days previously. Co-pilot was Second Lieutenant Robert F. Toner with Second Lieutenants Dp Hays as the navigator and John S. Woravka the bombardier. The flight engineer was Technical Sergeant Harold J. Ripslinger and T/Sergeant Robert E. LaMotte the radio operator. The three gunners were Staff Sergeants Samuel E. Adams, Vernon L. Moore and Guy E. Shelley.

Take-off for the eleven-hour round trip was set at 1.15 p.m. local time. The first twelve aircraft of Section A departed without trouble but the remaining B-24s had to take-off almost blind through the clouds of sand thrown in the air. During the outward flight this liberal dosing of desert dust began to take its toll of the thirteen aircraft in Section B and only four B-24s, led by the *Lady Be Good,*

The crew of the Lady Be Good. L-R: First Lieutenant William J. Hatton, pilot; Second Lieutenant Robert F. Toner, co-pilot; Second Lieutenant Dp Hays, navigator; Second Lieutenant John S. Woravka, bombardier; Technical Sergeant Harold S. Ripslinger, engineer; Technical Sergeant Robert E. LaMotte, radio operator; Staff Sergeant Guy E. Shelley, gunner; Staff Sergeant Vernon L. Moore, gunner, and Staff Sergeant Samuel R. Adams, gunner.

finally made it to Naples. By the time they reached the target area at 7.45 p.m., the sun was already down and the ground was deep in shadow making the Norden bomb sights unusable. Lieutenant Hatton turned the formation south away from the target, the other three aircraft following until they lost sight of each other in the darkness. By 11.10 p.m. the last B-24 had returned safely to Soluch and twenty-four aircraft were all accounted for including one which had landed at Malta short of fuel — all that is except the *Lady Be Good.*

Sixty-two minutes later, the Benina Radio Direction Finder Station at Bengazi received a call from Lieutenant Hatton requesting a bearing. In 1943 RDF stations were only equipped with a simple rotating antenna which, although giving an accurate bearing of the aircraft from the station, could not differentiate between an aircraft approaching the station or flying away from it. The log records that a magnetic bearing of 330 degrees was radioed to the plane. The crew, believing they were flying against a head wind and that they had not yet reached the coast, must have accepted the bearing for what it was i.e. 330 degrees from the station meaning that they must continue to fly, as they were already, on 150 degrees (the reciprocal bearing) to reach the station. It seems that it did not occur to the RDF operators that a call received one hour after the other aircraft had returned home could have meant that the B-24 might have already passed the station and was heading away from it into the desert. Likewise a report from Soluch airfield of a Liberator passing overhead flying south-east before midnight, after all the other aircraft had landed, was not given due emphasis. Both the crew and the radio station had made the mistake of reading off the back of the loop. Had the crew been dissatisfied with the bearing given they would obviously have checked with their own short range ADF (Automatic Director Finder). However, confident that they would reach the coast any

minute, they flew on into the Libyan desert without using the radio compass.

From altitude at night the desert can be mistaken for the sea but, after another hour had elapsed, the crew must have been aware something had gone wrong. By then it would have been too late to tune in to the low-power radio beacon at Soluch and no further call was received by the Benina RDF station. Knowing that their twelve-hours' fuel supply would be exhausted around 1.30 a.m., and not wanting to risk ditching the unwieldy B-24 at night, Lieutenant Hatton must have decided it would be safer for the crew to bale out. Already more than 200 miles into the desert, having trimmed the aircraft for level flight, he gave the order.

One can imagine the shock the crew must have felt, after preparing themselves by inflating their Mae Wests for a landing in water, to find themselves on dry land instead. No doubt they realised immediately what had gone wrong as they called to each other in the cold stillness of the desert. A roll call established everybody safe and unhurt except for the bombardier, Second Lieutenant Woravka. He had been one of the first to jump and they must have thought he had landed out of earshot to the north and was perhaps lying injured from the fall.

At first light the eight survivors set off to look for him, probably confident that search planes would soon arrive. Little did they realise that a search and rescue operation had been mounted but 200 miles away to the north in the wrong direction out over the sea. No one at base had realised the bearing error. The co-pilot Robert Toner recorded the previous day in his diary thus: Naples. 28 planes. Things pretty well mixed up. Got lost returning, out of gas, jumped, landed in desert at 2:00 in morning, no one badly hurt, can't find John, all others present.

Sergeant Ripslinger also made an entry in his diary: Sunday, April 4. Mission to Naples, Italy. T.O. 3:10 and droped bombs at 10:00. Lost coming back. Bailed out at 2:10 A.M. on dessert. *(All diary entries reproduced with original spelling. Ed.).*

Draping their parachute canopies over their heads to give a little shade from the Sahara sun, they spread out on a broad front to look for Woravka. The only sight to break the endless flat plain of sand and gravel stretching out on all sides was a rocky outcrop some miles to the north-west. There was also no sign of their aircraft.

After walking about a mile, one of the crew discarded his heavy, hot flying boots leaving them weighted with stones as an arrow marker pointing north. Still there was no sign of the missing crew member. Then they came across vehicle tracks in the sand — the tracks of five vehicles stretching out across the desert to the north-west. The decision was made to follow the tracks which seemed to lead in the general direction of Bengazi. Still no aircraft or any sign of Lieutenant Woravka — only the burning sand with only a half-filled water bottle between the eight men.

A suggestion was made to leave markers torn from the parachutes to mark their route and so an arrow made out of two strips of white cloth, weighed down with pebbles pointing north-west was laid out beside the trail they had been following. That evening the diary entries read as follows:

Lieutenant Toner: Monday 5. Start walking N.W., still no John. a few rations, ½ canteen of water, 1 cap full per day. Sun fairly warm. good breeze from N.W. Nite very cold, no sleep. Rested & walked.

Sergeant Ripslinger: Monday, April 5. All but Woravka met this A.M. Waited a while and started walking. Had ½ sandwhich & piece of candy & cap of water in last 36 hr.

They decided to continue and walk and rest throughout the cool night and, after covering ten miles, set up another marker beside the trail. By morning, to cut down on weight, the useless Mae Wests were left in a pile. During the day Ripslinger made a further entry in his diary: Tuesday, April 6. Started out early walking & resting. It's not sundown and still going. One teaspoon of water today. The rest of the boys are doing fine.

The fourth marker left by the crew beside the five-vehicle tracks comprised a portion of harness and parachute weighted down in the form of an arrowhead. A second parachute lies bundled nearby, partially covered by sand.

By now they had established a third trail marker although each man must have realised, with the absence of any aircraft, that it was of doubtful use and that they were on their own. However, having covered twenty-five miles, they must have been heartened at the progress they were making.

Towards evening they came across another set of tracks — obviously those of a whole column of vehicles — crossing their trail and heading north-east. According to the escape maps they were carrying, no tracks existed in the area running in that direction. They solved their dilemma by splitting up with Lieutenant Hays and Sergeant Adams volunteering to try the new trail. The others tore up more cloth to leave another marker to show which way the remaining six men had gone. Likewise, after a short distance, Hays and Adams left a marker beside their trail. However after finding nothing, and probably anxious that they might lose contact with the main party, they cut across to the old track. Meeting up with the other six around morning, they set up another parachute marker (the sixth as another had been set up during the night).

Lieutenant Toner also brought his diary entry up to date: Rested at 11:30, sun very warm, no breeze, spent P.M. in hell, no planes, etc. rested until 5:00 P.M. walked & rested all nite, 15 min. on, 5 off.

That evening Sergeant Ripslinger wrote: Wednesday, April 7. Started early A.M. and walked til about near spent. Terrible hot afternoon. Started again at 6 P.M. and walked all night. One spoon full of water is all.

Obviously getting weaker with spirits low and no sign of help, they proceeded slowly along the trail which stretched off into the

The seventh marker made from a parachute and shroud lines outlined with stones.

infinite distance. Another marker was laid out that evening, one of the crew dropping his face mask nearby. Next day Lieutenant Toner's diary records the despair that they must all have felt: Same routine, everyone getting weak, can't get very far, prayers all the time, again P.M. very warm, hell. Can't sleep. Everyone sore from ground.

Around midnight the flat, hard desert plain began to give way to rolling dunes — they had reached the beginning of the Great Sand Sea. The going in the soft sand in their weakened state slowed down their progress enormously. By the evening, having walked on and off for five days, Lieutenant Toner's diary described their plight: Hit Sand Dunes, very miserable, good wind but continuous blowing of sand, everybody now very weak, thought Sam & Moore were all gone. La Motte eyes are gone, everyone else's eyes are bad. Still going N.W.

Ripslinger also confided their feelings in his entry: Friday, April 9. 5th day out & we all thought we're gone. All wanted to die during noon it was so hot. Morn & nite okay.

By evening, after covering an incredible 65 miles, Lieutenants Hatton, Toner and Hayes and Sergeants Adams and LaMotte were too exhausted and unable to go any further. Lieutenant Toner's diary entry tells us that: Shelley, Rip, Moore separate and try to go for help, rest of us all very weak, eyes bad. Not any travel, all want to die, still very little water. nites are about 35°, good N. wind, no shelter, 1 parachute left.

While the three sergeants struggled on through the dunes, the others lay where they were, too weak to move. There are three more entries in Toner's diary:

SATURDAY, Apr. 10, 1943. Still having prayer meetings for help. No signs of anything, a couple of birds; good wind from N. Really weak now, can't walk, pains all over, still all want to die. Nites very cold, no sleep.

SUNDAY 11. Still waiting for help, still praying, eyes bad, lost all our wgt. aching all over, could make it if we had water; just enough left to put our tongue to, have hope for help very soon, no rest, still same place.

MONDAY 12. No help yet, very (unreadable) cold nite.

His entries end on the eighth day after the epic march began.

Meanwhile the other three pushed on through the dunes of the dreaded Calanscio Sand Sea. Sergeant Ripslinger fell twenty miles further on — the last entry in his diary being made on Sunday April 11: Palm Sun. Still struggling to get out of dunes and find water.

At some stage, Sergeant Moore also collapsed but Guy Shelley, a 26-year-old from Bellaire, Ohio, staggered another seven miles into the sand sea having completed an incredible total distance of ninety miles, the last two or three days since leaving the others without any water at all.

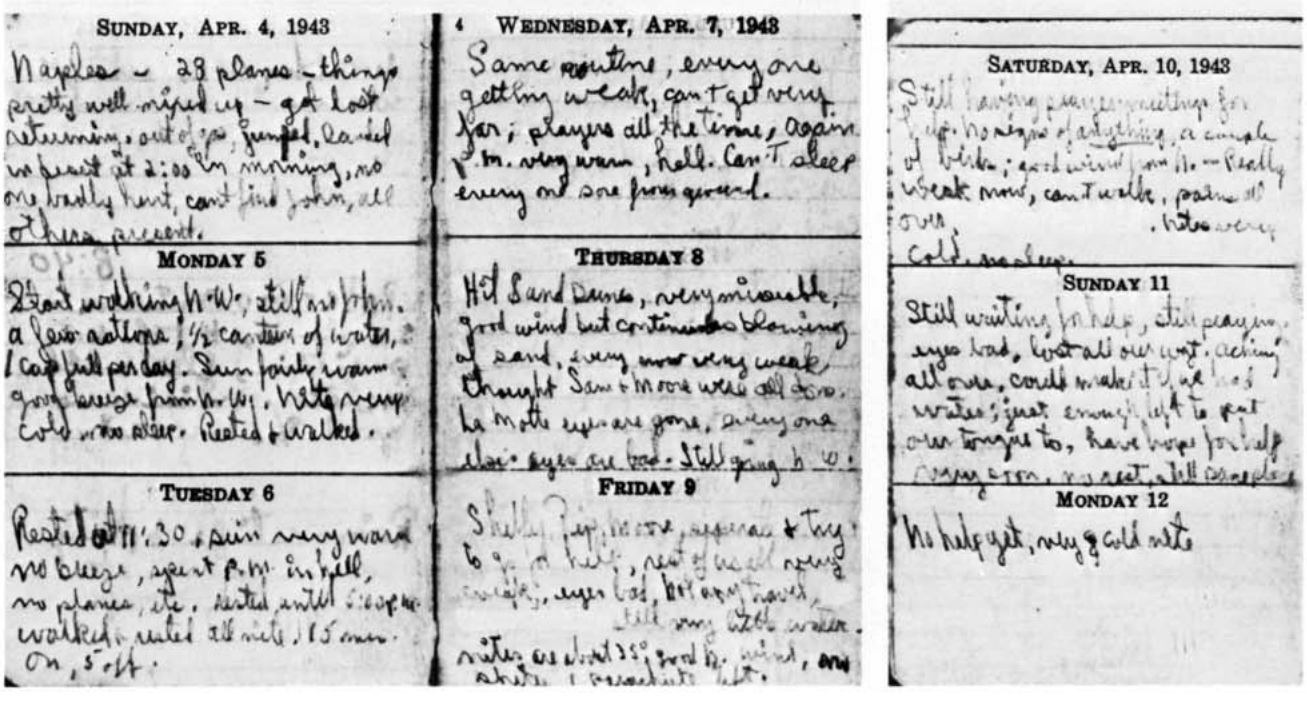
The last marker (the eighth) from a parachute arrowhead pointing to a bearing of 325 degrees. The harness is visible in the top left-hand corner.

Sixteen-year mystery

Meanwhile 275 miles to the north at Soluch airfield, the Army Air Corps, unaware of the two clues which might have lead the search in another direction, continued to make an aerial reconnaissance out over the sea in the direction of Naples and in the Gulf of Sirte. When no trace of crew or aircraft wreckage was seen, the search was abandoned and the next of kin were informed that the men were missing in action.

By April 1944, all southern Italy and Sicily where the *Lady Be Good* could have crashed was in Allied hands and a board of officers, convened under the Missing Persons Act, reported on April 5 that the status of Lieutenant Hatton's crew should be amended with the addition of the words 'and presumed dead'.

A further Board of Enquiry, meeting on April 10, 1946 in Rome, after considering all the evidence including captured German and Italian records and those of the prisoner-of-war camps, confirmed that it must be presumed that the crew had been killed in action. Nevertheless a final enquiry representing the US Army's Graves Registration Service, administered by the office of the Adjutant General, met again in Rome on June 15, 1948 to once again examine the records. It determined that every possible effort had been made to find the nine missing crewmen and it must be presumed that they crashed in the Mediterranean without trace. Accordingly the names were forwarded for inscription on the Memorial Wall in the



American War Cemetery at Carthage in Tunisia.

With the ending of the hostilities, the former Italian-held territories of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were at first under joint Anglo-French military government rule until they were formed into the independent United Kingdom of Libya by the United Nations in 1949. In return for aid, British and American forces were allowed to maintain military bases in the country and the RAF occupied an important airfield base outside Tobruk at El Adem whilst to the west, the USAF operated from Tripoli airfield which they renamed Wheelus Air Base. Two years later the country received its independence under King Idris I.

The new king took over a poor country with few mineral resources, large areas of which were uninhabitable. However, the discovery of oil in the Algerian Sahara suddenly made Libya an extremely attractive prospect to oil explorers. The entire country had once been sea floor and the porous sedimentary rock almost 3000 feet thick which lay under the sand gave the ideal geological conditions for a major find.

In the late 1950s, increasing aerial surveys covered the hinterland as the oil companies searched for likely sites to begin exploration. On the afternoon of November 9, 1958, an aircraft from the D'Arcy Exploration Company Ltd., with bases in Tripoli and Bengazi, was flying across the desert south of Tobruk when one of the geologists on board, Ronald G. MacLean, spotted what looked like an aircraft stationery on the desert sand. Losing height, they circled for a closer examination. Painted pink, the machine was obviously a heavy bomber of World War II origin and the American white star in a blue circle was clearly visible. Roughly pin-pointing the position on his map, MacLean reported the find on their return to base; not that the aircraft was specially significant as many wartime crashes and debris still littered the desert although it was unusual to find anything so far south — some 385 miles from Tobruk.

The following year, the survey flights and reports were due to be followed up by a ground party to chart the strata mapped by Ronald MacLean. In February 1959 the party set out from Kufra Oasis in a convoy of Land-Rovers to examine the desert to the north. By March 1 they reached a flat featureless plain which stretched unbroken as far as the eye could see in every direction. As the three surveyors, Bowerman, Martin and Sheridan, had noted MacLean's report about a crashed American bomber on the plateau, they kept a sharp look out. They spotted the aircraft some five miles away and altered course towards it.

Although the undercarriage was not visible, the huge aircraft was lying on an even keel as if it had made a forced landing. Its back had broken, the rear fuselage and twin tails lying askew. Every item of equipment seemed untouched, the crew's belongings still in position with ammunition still hanging from the Browning machine guns. There was no sign of the crew and no parachutes and, incredible as it seemed, it appeared to the geologists that the aircraft must have landed itself. Having noted the serial number, still clearly visible on the tail and copied the stencilled lettering on the fuselage and taken the sextant, bombsight, chronometer and compass as souvenirs, the team carried on with their survey.

The following month, after they returned to base, Gordon Bowerman informed the American authorities at Wheelus Air Base of the identity of the aircraft and its position. Not having any WWII records on the base, they contacted USAF HQ in Wiesbaden, Germany who, in turn, requested a full history on the aircraft from Washington.

On June 4, 1959 the story of the discovery of a WWII bomber in the Libyan desert which had crashed sixteen years previously was released to the press by Headquarters USAF, Wiesbaden. The story immediately fired the imagination of journalists everywhere and the Air Force Press desk in Washington issued a follow-up statement the next day:

'A two-man team from the Army Mortuary Service with headquarters at Frankfurt, Germany, departed on May 11 to investigate the crashed B-24 in Libya reported by Gordon Dowerman of D'Arcy Exploration Co., Ltd. The B-24 had taken off from Soluch, Libya, on 4 April 1943 on a high-altitude bombing mission to Naples, Italy. Course of the flight is not indicated, nor if it actually reached its target. The Mortuary Team made a one-hour flight over the area and plans a ground search as most feasible. Wreckage was located about 158 nautical miles north-northeast of Kufra

Oasis.' *(Bowerman's name is spelt incorrectly in the original text. Ed.)*

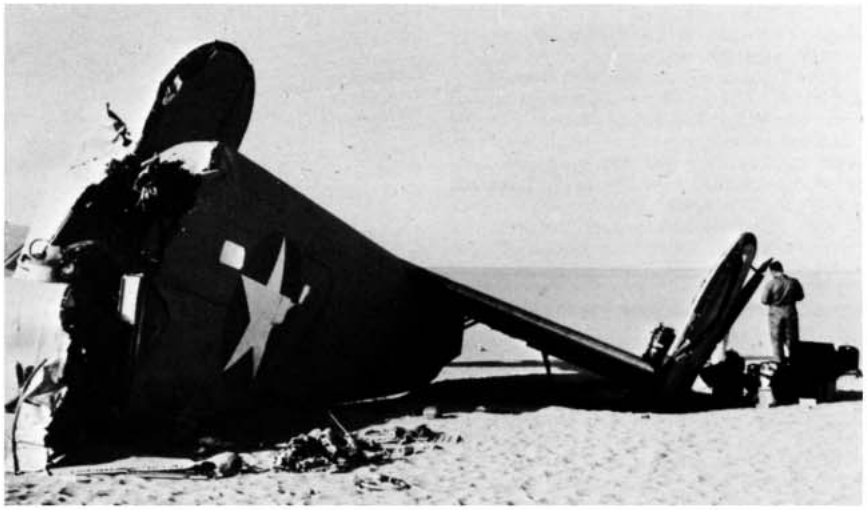
The Adjutant General's office in Washington had already notified the next of kin of the bomber's discovery but, long before any thorough investigation of the site had begun, reporters began descending on those relatives they could trace. Two of the crewmen had been married, Lieutenant Hatton and Staff Sergeant Adams, both of whose wives had since remarried. Sam Adams' son, unborn when he was posted overseas, was now 16 years old.

The story spawned countless speculative ideas about the fate of the crew, typical being one that they had been captured and killed and/or taken prisoner by desert nomads. Freelance writers tried to solve the mystery in several different publications, all the available maps of the area giving no clues as to what may have happened. Meanwhile the authorities were delving into personnel records stored at St. Louis and it was appreciated at the highest level that every effort must be made to establish once and for all the fate of the crew.

Above: **May 26, 1959 — first examination of the wreckage. The SC-47, which flew the experts into the desert from Wheelus Air Base, stands in the background.** *Below:* **Sixteen years' exposure to the elements had hardly left a mark on the B-24 except for the plexiglass which had frosted from the wind-blown sand.**

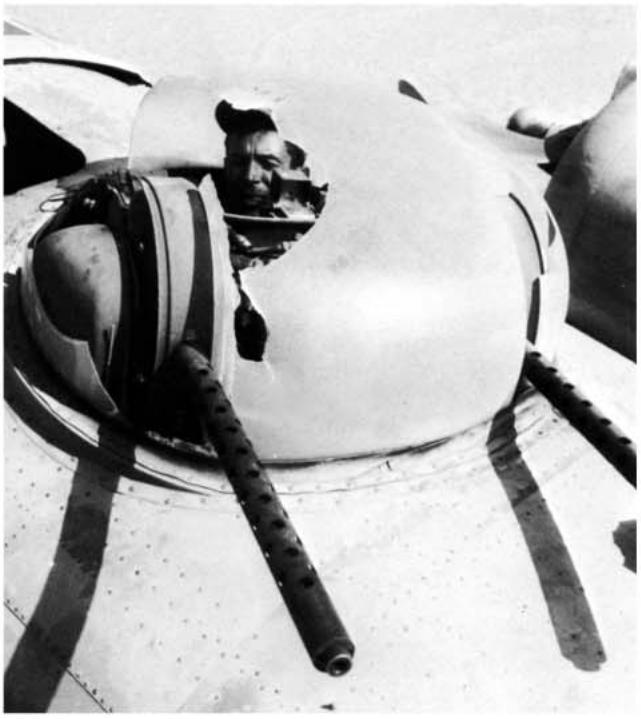
The first official examination of the B-24 had been carried out by personnel from the US Army Mortuary Service. As no one from that service was stationed in North Africa, Captains Myron C. Fuller and Wesley Neep were flown to Wheelus from Frankfurt, Germany on May 11. On their arrival, Major H. E. Hays of the 58th Air Rescue Squadron flew them out over the desert to locate the aircraft and pinpoint its exact co-ordinates — established as 2654 North/2408 East. Then on May 26, accompanied by Captain James M. Paule, an Air Force flight surgeon and authority on desert survival, and other personnel including an Army photographer, they returned to make a landing beside the B-24. Major William F. Rubertus had offered to fly the SC-47 and land it in the desert and a single-engined Cessna L-19 Bird Dog observation plane went on ahead to establish a suitable landing strip and light smoke markers.

Their close examination of the aircraft only heightened the mystery of the fate of the missing crewmen. Analysis of the crash site showed that the aircraft had struck the



Painted insignia still clearly visible on the broken fuselage.

Members of the search team examine the mounting for the No. 4 engine while another photographs the cockpit.



Above: **The guns and ammunition were still in perfect working order although it was necessary for the search team to break the plexiglass to help ventilate the suffocating interior. The No. 4 engine is visible in the background of the photo** *below.*

ground in a near level flight altitude and had skidded across the pebbly surface from east to west for 700 yards before finally coming to rest pointing south-east. The propellers on engines 1, 2 and 3 had all been feathered indicating that their fuel tanks had run dry. A cockpit check confirmed that the pilot had set the throttle, generator and mixture levers to those engines in the closed position with the switches turned off. The fourth engine was set for full operation and it had obviously been running when the aircraft crashed as it had been torn from its mounting and had propelled itself some 50 yards further on. From this it seemed evident that the reason for the crash was lack of fuel. The flaps and landing gear were still retracted yet the autopilot was not engaged which would have been expected for hands-off flight while the crew bailed out for the open bomb-bay doors indicated that this was what they had done.

The radio was in working order, a fact which was established by exchanging it for a faulty one in the SC-47 transport. The magnetic compass was checked and found in order as was the ADF radio compass. The oxygen bottles were still two-thirds full and there was no sign of a fire. The guns still worked — proved by the simple-expedient of pulling the triggers.

Inside the aircraft a thermos flask three-quarters full of coffee was found beside Sergeant Ripslinger's engineers position. Packets of cigarettes were scattered about with butts in the ashtrays. The emergency rations were largely intact and high altitude clothing still hung neatly on hooks. The pilot's Flight Log neatly listed all the crew members but gave no clue to the success or otherwise of the mission.

The Army team spent two days at the crash site, searching the nearby area with a fine toothcomb, but no further clues were discovered. In fact the investigation still left as many questions unanswered as before.

The search begins

It was clear that the matter could not be left as it was as the press were clamouring for news and release of the Army's photographs of the ghost wreck only heightened their interest.

It was therefore decided to mount a large-scale search operation, from both the air and the ground to systematically cover the likely route of the survivors. Captain Fuller decided to engage the services of a former Yugoslav Air Force and RAF navigator and local desert expert, Alexander Karadzic, manager of the Saly Company, a war salvage and mine clearance firm based in Tripoli, to set up a desert base camp from which to mount the operation.

The base camp was set up just north of the *Lady Be Good* as it was assumed that the crew would have attempted to walk northwards towards the coast. Karadzic arrived at the rendezvous with his overland convoy and a sweep pattern was organised to the north on a wide front. About eight miles from the aircraft, the searchers came across vehicle tracks heading north-north west. Karadzic identified the tracks as being made by five Italian military vehicles. Fine sand had covered the ruts to make them invisible from the air but at ground level they were easily discernable. Surmising that if the American crewmen had found the tracks they would almost certainly have followed them like a lifeline, the search party also decided to follow them. Sure enough within two miles came the first find — a pair of weighted flying boots still standing in the sand pointing forlornly along the track. It seemed inconceivable that anyone else could have placed a pair of American flying boots at that spot other than a *Lady Be Good* crewman and as it was also impossible to see the B-24 from that point, the searchers assumed that the crewman had continued northwards following the tyre tracks.

Pushing along slowly, covering both sides of the track (the boots had been found on the eastern side), early the next morning the party came across another marker. This one, made of strips of parachute weighted down with rocks, pointed directly up the trail. Leaving the marker undisturbed the team pressed on, enthusiastically expecting to find further clues any minute. Soon they came across six discarded Mae Wests, two marked with the names of the crew, proof that at least that number of crewmen had joined up after baling out. Also as the carbon dioxide inflation bottles had been fired, it was evident the escaping crewmen thought they were about to land on water.

Soon after passing another parachute strip arrow, the searchers came across the old tracks of a large vehicle column crossing the Italian track from north-east to south-west. Karadzic estimated around 80 British-tyred vehicles had passed that way, probably to or from Siwa Oasis which lay 175 miles to the north-east. The junction of the trails was some 25 miles from the estimated bale-out point and the desert survival expert, Captain Paule, felt they would now find the remains of the crew at anytime. No-one, he felt, could last more than a day or so on foot in the desert without water.

Not knowing which of the two tracks the crew would have chosen to follow, the party decided to camp for the night to make a wider search of the area. The agonizing choice the crewmen must have faced on reaching the new tracks, knowing that it could be a life or death decision, was only too evident to the searchers. Parties were sent out to look along both tracks and, a few hundred yards along the Italian trail, another parachute marker was discovered. It therefore seemed that the *Lady's* crew had decided to stick to the original track rather than change horses midstream.

Next morning the search party continued slowly northwards following the Italian tyre tracks and combing the ground on either side for clues. Any moment they expected to come across the remains of the crew — none of the searchers could imagine that they could have lasted much further. Some five miles further on another strip of parachute cloth was found and then another, the seventh in all, ten miles beyond. They were now at least forty miles from where the first marker had been found, a seemingly impossible distance for the crew to have covered, ill-equipped as they were for desert travel. Nearby a small piece of cloth was found, cut as a face mask with eye holes, evidently discarded or lost by one of the crew who had used it as a protection against the burning sun.

However although the search vehicles continued along the trail, no further evidence — human remains, belongings or markers — were discovered. As the trail petered out when it reached the huge dunes of the Calanscio Sand Sea, some twenty-five miles further on, the search was extended out sideways from the last marker and, although an area of several square miles was examined in detail, nothing was found to indicate the direction the crewmen had taken after the seventh marker.

Captain Fuller decided the only course was to set up a base camp between the junction of the British and Italian tracks and then to cover the whole area in an organised search pattern. As this was being organised, one of the men driving up the British trail found a marker on the west side of the track. Nearby was another Mae West (the seventh) and an airman's flight helmet. This discovery put a whole new dimension on the probable movements of the crew as it now seemed that they had split up on reaching the junction and it was obvious that the search would also have to be extended along the British track. As this route also met the dreaded 700ft. dunes of the Sand Sea some twenty-five miles further on, the search area was extended to cover over a thousand square miles of the plateau.

The trucks would work in pairs, one keeping a straight course by sun compass while a second vehicle zig-zagged from side to side. In this way the whole area between the trails was meticulously covered but, after two weeks, no further clues had come to light. It seemed incredible that the crew could have reached the sand sea, 65 miles from where they started, but the evidence all began to point that they had somehow managed this epic feat of endurance.

Meanwhile back at Wheelus Air Base, Major General H. P. Spicer, Commanding General of the US Seventeenth Air Force, was becoming impatient with the lack of positive news. The media were still pressing for information and he also was anxious for results. He therefore flew out to the base camp late in July to confer with Captain Fuller and Alex Karadzic. The General joined the search parties but he soon appreciated that everything that could be done with surface vehicles had been done. He therefore contacted USAF HQ at Weisbaden for reinforcements. What was needed was a Lockheed C-130 Hercules transport to airlift two Bell H-13 Sioux helicopters into the desert from Wheelus. In mid-August, a C-130 from the 322nd Air Division, based at Evreax, France collected the helicopters from the 329th Army Engineer Detachment at Wheelus and, flying via Benina Airport at Bengazi, landed at the plateau base camp.

The choppers were able to cover the whole area from a different dimension and were able to extend the search into the fringe of the Sand Sea. In order to cover every angle, a helicopter and vehicle probe was made right through the sand dunes on the 340 degree bearing of the Italian vehicle tracks to confirm or deny one rumour that the crew had been captured and buried in the desert (even though this was most unlikely as the war in that area had moved westward at least three months before the *Lady Be Good* crashed). Nevertheless, even the low-level helicopter sweeps revealed nothing to help solve the mystery. In one final effort, General Spicer requested an aerial photographic survey of the entire area which was undertaken by two Douglas RB-66 Destroyer aircraft from the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing at Spangdahlen Air Base in Germany. However when the mosaic prints were developed they indicated nothing new and it seemed apparent that the crew must have ventured into the sand sea, succumbed and been buried in the dunes. Every possible effort had been made; 5,500 square miles of desert had been searched with a fine toothcomb by land, in the air and by photography and it was felt that nothing further could be done. After three months work, the US Army officially called off the search.

Left: **Captain Oldrich Dolezal (centre), supply pilot for the BP oil crew, radioed the first message of the discovery of human remains to Wheelus. Here he points out the position to base commander, Colonel Stebbins W. Griffith (left) and Dr. D. L. Gabby of the 7272nd USAF hospital as they fly into the desert.**

The desert gives up its secret

Five months passed. On February 2, 1960 American TV broadcast a programme on the *Lady Be Good* drama in the Armstrong Circle Theatre series to try to explain the complete disappearance of nine American flyers in spite of a prolonged and expensive search. The programme ended with the belief that the crewmen lay buried under the sand for all time. Incredibly, 3,500 miles away in the uninhabited wilderness of North Africa, the mystery was about to unfold. There, on the north-western edge of the plateau, some 75 miles from the wreck of the *Lady Be Good,* which had by then become a desert landmark, useful as a navigational check in an area devoid of any natural features, an oil exploration party were surveying the area. The team was under contract to the British Petroleum Company and was led by an American, James W. Backhaus. On February 11, a message was flashed to Wheelus from the exploration party's supply aircraft — human remains, believed to be of crewmen from the *Lady Be Good,* had been found in the desert.

Although it seemed impossible that the previous year's search parties could have missed anything as the reported position was in the centre of the area covered, nevertheless the Wheelus base commander, Colonel Stebbins W. Griffith, immediately prepared to check out the report. General Griffith's co-pilot in the C-47 was Major Rubertus who had flown the first transport out the previous August and who had just returned from appearing in the New York TV programme. With the party was Lieutenant Colonel William G. Woods, head chaplain at Wheelus. Landing safely beside the BP oil survey camp, Jim Backhaus guided the party to the location. One of those present, Walt C. Wandell, described the scene they found:

'Against a background of jumbled dunes and desert vastness, which gave the impression of a location on the moon, were the remnants of a pathetic little camp. Five bodies were closely grouped in an area littered with canteens, flashlights, pieces of parachute fabric and harness, sheepskin-lined flight jackets, shoes, a Mae West life preserver *(the eighth to be found on the plateau. Ed.)* and other readily identifiable bits of equipment and personal effects. Oilmen joined the Wheelus party in a simple but impressive prayer ceremony over the remains.'

One of the items found positively identified the remains as being from the wartime B-24 — a sunglasses case named 2nd Lt. Dp Hays, the *Lady Be Good* navigator.

Instructing that the bodies be covered until experts could be brought in to identify and remove the remains, Colonel Griffith later commented that, 'It was apparent, that the crew members had made temporary camp at a point where they probably had reached the limit of their endurance. This was after walking a minimum of fifty miles. It was quite evident that the group had maintained close discipline and had followed the prescribed desert-survival procedures to the very end.'

On his return to base, Colonel Griffith contacted Wiesbaden and Captain Fuller once again flew south, this time accompanied by an Army field investigator, Hugo A. Schaefer, and on February 17 they were flown to where the remains had been discovered.

Identification 'dogtags' were found to put names to four of the five bodies which lay scattered, half-covered in the sand. Of those parts of the bodies which had been exposed to the wind and sun for seventeen years, only bleached bones remained. A thorough examination of the pathetic camp site revealed several pairs of shoes, discarded when the men could walk no further; a pair of leather gloves; a Red Cross pullover and a flight cap with a 2nd Lieutenant's insignia; a wallet containing an Egyptian banknote and a silk escape map and an empty water bottle. Most moving of all was Lieutenant Robert Toner's diary.

The following day a statement on what had been discovered was released at Wheelus:

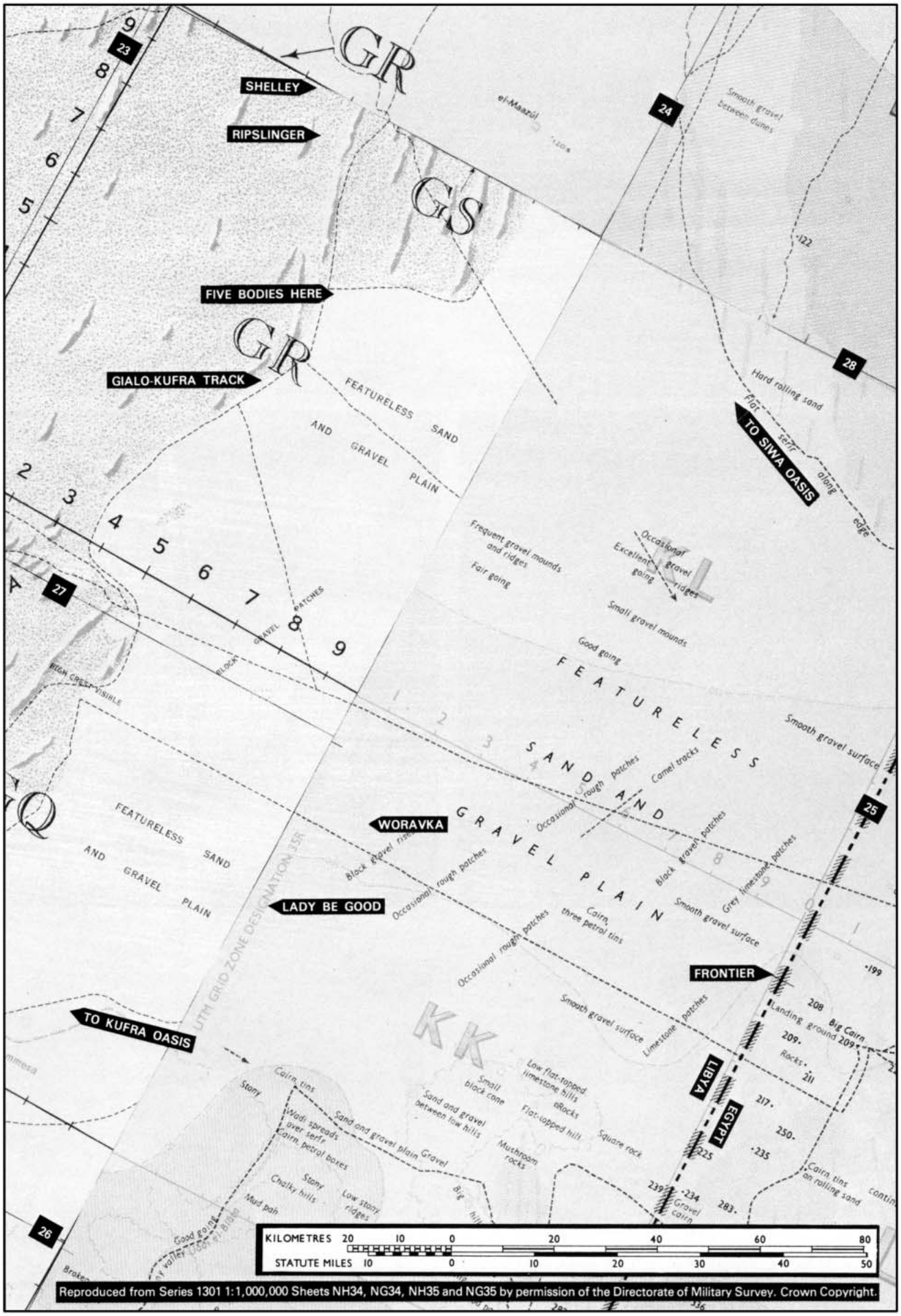
'Entries in the diary indicate that only five of the nine members of the crew died at this location. One failed to join the party after bailout from the bomber and three later left the group to continue on ahead for help.

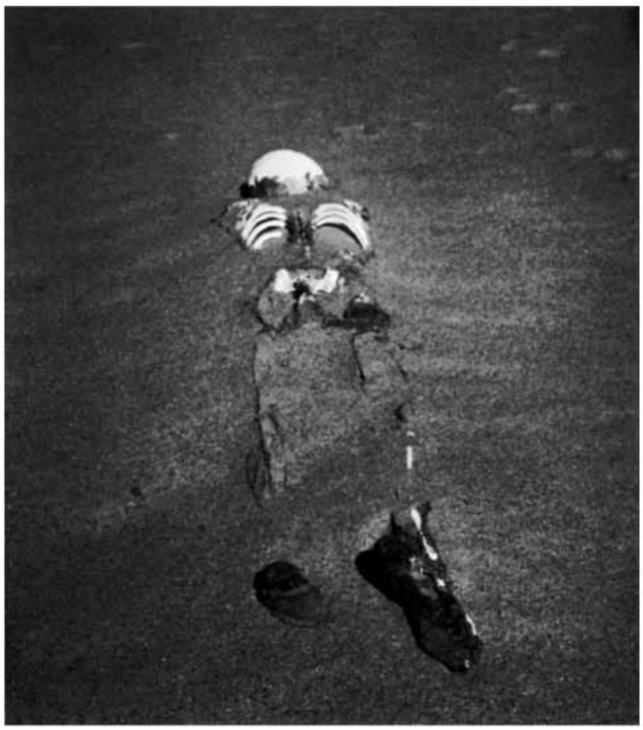
'No positive personal identification has been made, but experts of the US Army Mortuary Service were said to indicate the members of the group being recovered were 1st Lt. William J. Hatton, pilot; 2nd Lt. Robert F. Toner, co-pilot; 2nd Lt. Dp Hays, navigator; Tech. Sergeant Robert E. LaMotte, crew member; and Staff Sergeant Samuel R. Adams, crew member.

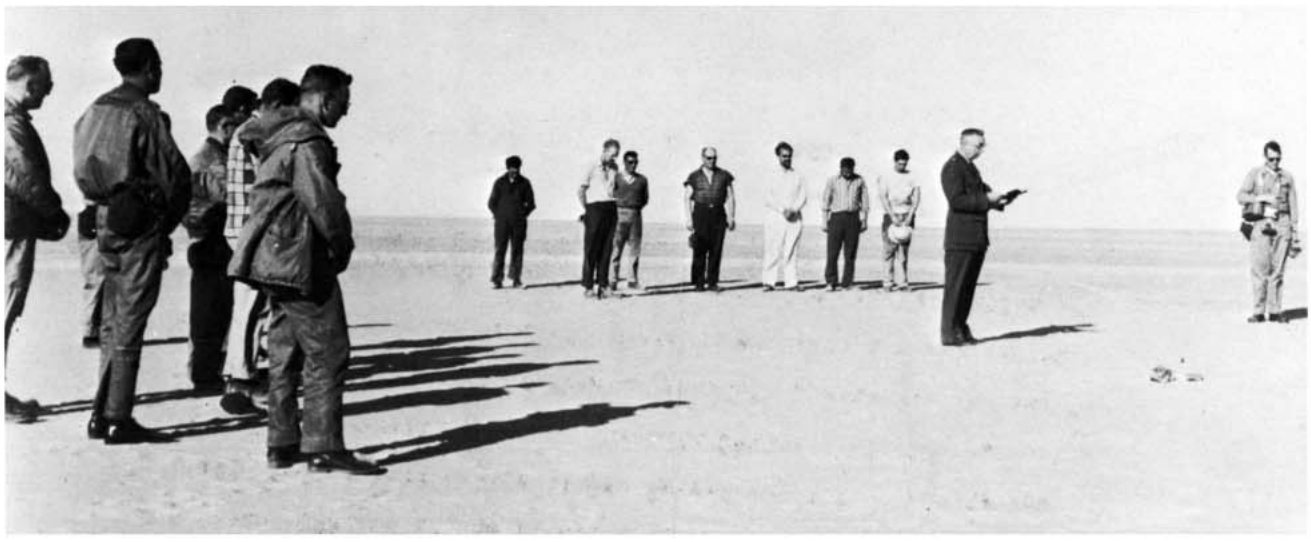
'The tentative identifications are indicated from diary entries, and from such physical evidence on the spot as dog tags, an identity book, an Air Corps ring and other personal effects.

'Captain Myron C. Fuller, of Placerville, California, head of the mortuary team, said that the personal account found indicated that the man who failed to join the party after bailout was 2nd Lt. John S. Woravka, bombardier, and the three who left the main

When they arrived at the prospector's campsite, Jim Backhaus (left) led the party to where the remains had been found. Chaplain Woods watches Colonel Griffith examine the sunglasses' case named '2nd Lt. Dp Hays' — proof that the bodies were crewmen from the Lady Be Good.


SHELLEY
RIPSLINGER
FIVE BODIES HERE
GIALO-KUFRA TRACK
TO SIWA OASIS
WORAVKA
LADY BE GOOD
TO KUFRA OASIS
FRONTIER
LIBYA
EGYPT
FEATURELESS SAND AND GRAVEL PLAIN
FEATURELESS SAND AND GRAVEL PLAIN
GR
GS
GR
KK
Hard rolling sand
Flat
Smooth gravel between dunes
Frequent gravel mounds and ridges
Fair going
Occasional gravel ridges
Excellent going
Small gravel mounds
Good going
Smooth gravel surface
Camel tracks
Occasional rough patches
Black gravel patches
Grey limestone patches
Cairn, three petrol tins
Landing ground
Big Cairn
Rocks
Low flat-topped limestone hills
Small black cone
Flat-topped hill
Square rock
Mushroom rocks
Sand and gravel between low hills
Sand and gravel plain
Gravel
Wadi spreads over serir
Cairn, petrol boxes
Stony
Chalky hills
Low stony ridges
Mud pan
Cairn tins on rolling sand
Gravel cairn
Limestone patches
Good going
Broken
KILOMETRES 20 10 0 20 40 60 80
STATUTE MILES 10 0 10 20 30 40 50
Reproduced from Series 1301 1:1,000,000 Sheets NH34, NG34, NH35 and NG35 by permission of the Directorate of Military Survey. Crown Copyright.





Oilmen join the servicemen in a prayer service led by Chaplain Woods in the tragic campsite where death came to five crewmen.

Above: **As the SC-47 prepares to take on board the flag-draped remains, Operation Climax to find the four crewmen still missing swings into action. A nineteen-man team set up Camp Climax** *photo below* **to continue the search.**

group were Tech. Sergeant Harold S. Ripslinger, Staff Sergeant Guy E. Shelley, and Staff Sergeant Vernon L. Moore.

'These diary indications eliminated the possibility that other bodies would be found in this immediate location. It had been previously thought the remains of other members of the crew might be buried in the sand nearby.

'Bailout time was established by the diary, which indicated that the five men in the group being recovered reached this location April 9th, five days after bailout. The last entry in the book was April 12th, but the exact date of death is unknown.'

Now that five bodies had been recovered, the military felt that a renewed effort must be made to find the four missing men and a combined Army/Air Force expedition 'Operation Climax' was set into operation.

First a photo map of the area was prepared from a new survey flown by McDonnell RF-101 Voodoos from Laon Air Base in France. This was then sub-divided for detailed search by the Army helicopters which were again airlifted to the desert. Army personnel in vehicles co-ordinated the search and checked out the ground being examined. Without any reference to it in Lieutenant Toner's diary, it was assumed that the parachute marker found beside the British trail must have been set up by the 'John' (see entries for April 4 and 5) who had failed to meet up with the others after the landing. It was felt therefore that John Woravka may well be found in a separate area to the other three having tried to make his own way following the British tracks.

Nevertheless the massive new search failed to trace any of the missing crewmen and it was something of an embarrassment for the military searchers to receive another message from the BP oil team, who had meanwhile moved on up the Italian trail, to the effect that they had found two more bodies in the dunes. The position of the first body when plotted on a map indicated that the location was an incredible 21 miles into the sand dunes. When the searchers reached the spot, the remains were immmediately identified from a diary as being those of Sergeant Ripslinger.

Even more surprising was the position of the second crewman — a further six miles into the sand sea. This was the body of Sergeant Guy Shelley who had walked an unbelievable 90 miles and survived at least ten days on only five tablespoons of water with none at all during his last 27 miles through the dunes.

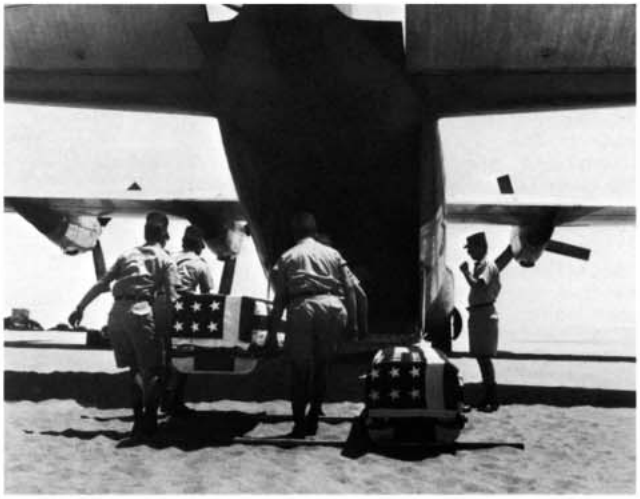
Two crew still remained to be traced. From the diary entries, the searchers knew that Staff Sergeant Vernon Moore should lie somewhere nearby but an exhaustive search of the dunes

Above: **Identification specialist, Captain Wesley A. Neep (left) with SP-4 James L. Heasley and Sfc David L. Flanigan, all of the Quartermaster Mortuary System HQ in Frankfurt, cover the remains of one of the crewmen found in the Calanscio Sand Sea. Other members taking part in the search look on in the background.**

failed to uncover his remains. Likewise, although the British trail was explored for an equivalent distance into the dunes for Second Lieutenant Woravka, nothing was found. Once again the search was called off.

But still the *Lady* would not rest. In August a further message was received from the British Petroleum Company that another of their survey teams had found the remains of a further US airman — this time at 2654 North/2408 East — a position quite close to the wreck of the *Lady Be Good* herself. This time the Wheelus deputy base commander, Colonel Benjamin S. Lambeth, with Major Rubertus, who was by now well familiar with the terrain, flew a C-47 to the plateau landing near the wrecked B-24. They were met on arrival by the BP prospectors and taken to the body which lay about 18 miles to the north and just beyond the area initially searched around the crash site. Colonel Edward G. Cada, the Director of Medical Services at Wheelus, immediately identified the body as that of Second Lieutenant John Woravka. It was still clothed in a flying suit and Mae West and it was obvious from the tangled shrouds around the body that his parachute had failed to open. His death on impact explained the reason why he had not joined up with the others after landing. (As it was now realised that he could not have left the lone marker beside the British track, it can be presumed that this was left by the others as described earlier). Amazingly, Lieutenant Woravka's water bottle was still three-quarters full after lying exposed in the sand for over 17 years. Then, just a few hundred yards to the south, the team came upon a pile of parachute harnesses and expended signal flare cartridge cases marking the spot where the crew made their rendezvous.

Above: **An official picture showing the assembly of the remains of one of the two crewmen discovered in the Sand Sea. They were found whilst Dave Glover (transport engineer) and Don Livingstone (surveyor) of the BP oil unit were planting beacons to mark a path through the 200ft dunes.** *Below:* **The shipping caskets are flown to Germany.**



With the finding of John Woravka's body, the incredible saga came to a close. Staff Sergeant Moore's remains have never been found but it is presumed they lie buried in the sand sea beyond the Italian trail and his is the only name that now remains memorialised on the Tablets of the Missing at the North African American Cemetery at Carthage.

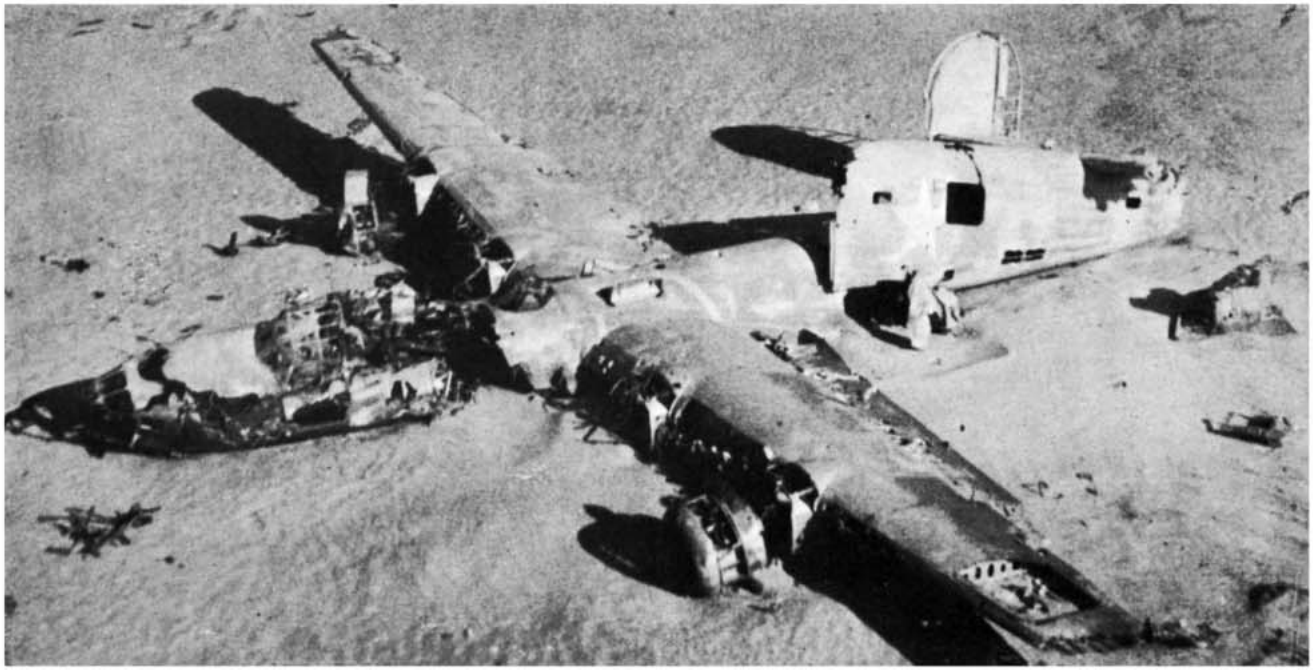
All the other remains were flown to Frankfurt for formal identification before being repatriated to the United States for burial in their home town cemeteries. Lieutenant Hatton now lies in New Jersey, New York; Second Lieutenant Toner of Woonsocket, Rhode Island to Massachusetts; Sergeant Ripslinger in Saginaw, Michigan and Sergeant Shelley to Pennsylvania (although his home town was Bellaire, Ohio); Sergeant LaMotte to Lake Linden and Sergeant Adams to Eureka, Illinois. Only one man remains nationally commemorated — Second Lieutenant Dp Hayes who now lies in Arlington National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia.

Lieutenant Woravka, found a few miles north from the Lady Be Good, still lying as he had fallen seventeen years earlier. He is now buried in a private cemetery in Ohio.

Above: **Military funeral for T/Sergeant LaMotte at Lake Linden Cemetery, Michigan.** *Right:* **The grave of Second Lieutenant Dp Hays, No. 3300A, in Section 4 of Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia (David O. Hale).**

In 1961 one of the propellers was erected at Wheelus and a stained glass window inserted in the base chapel depicting a broken aircraft lying on the desert with three F-100 Super Sabres flying overhead. However when Colonel Muammar El Qadhafi overthrew King Idris in 1969, American forces were compelled to quit the base. Before leaving, the stained glass window was dismantled and shipped to the USAF Museum at the Wright Patterson Air Force base in Ohio and the propeller was sent to the village of Lake Linden, home town of Sergeant LaMotte.

Above: **The propeller from No. 2 engine, removed for display by the 40th Troop Carrier Squadron, is now in the Lady Be Good exhibition at the USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio,** *photo above left.* **(Note the chin and forward .50 calibre Brownings had been removed when this photo was taken — see picture page 39).** *Below:* **The No. 1 engine propeller photographed just before its removal from Wheelus Air Base in January 1970 now located outside the village hall at Lake Linden, Michigan** *photo below right.*



The *Lady Be Good* herself was stripped to the bone, both officially and by unofficial visitors. On the one hand, the scientists were eager to examine components from the aircraft to determine how they had withstood the searing desert heat for 16 years. It was already appreciated that the dry atmosphere would withstand corrosion as this was one of the reasons for siting the huge USAF aircraft storage area at Davis-Monthan Air Base in Arizona. By March 1960, the Vickers Division of Sperry Rand had obtained eleven hydraulic components for examination including the main system pump, relief valve, accumulator, turret transmission and various engine components. All were found to have little or no corrosion, piston surfaces being bright and shiny and the rods moved freely and were coated with a film of oil when extended. About a quart of red hydraulic fluid was obtained from the system and although slightly discoloured it was still in a satisfactory condition.

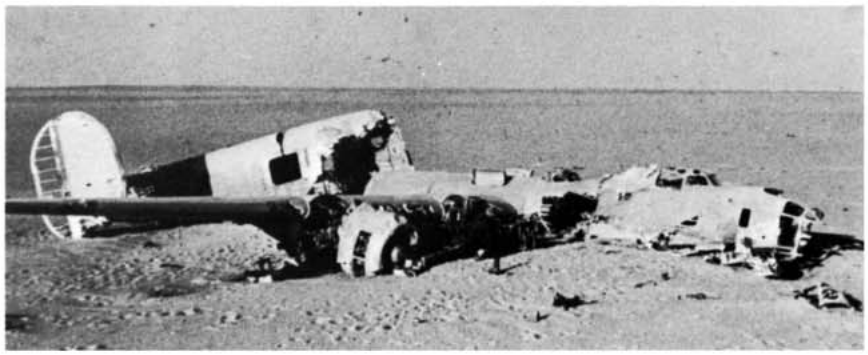
Another equipment analysis was conducted by the Olin Company of East Alton, Illinois, on four .45 auto cartridges from the *Lady Be Good.* The tests were conducted in 1962 on ammunition manufactured by the Remington Arms Company in 1942. The 1962 standards for the ammo (the same as in 1942) were 820 feet-per-second velocity, and the average pressure was not to exceed 19,000 pounds per square inch. The *Lady's* cartridges averaged 871.5 fps and 18,275 psi. Olin concluded that 'from a ballistic standpoint, the ammunition appears safe.'

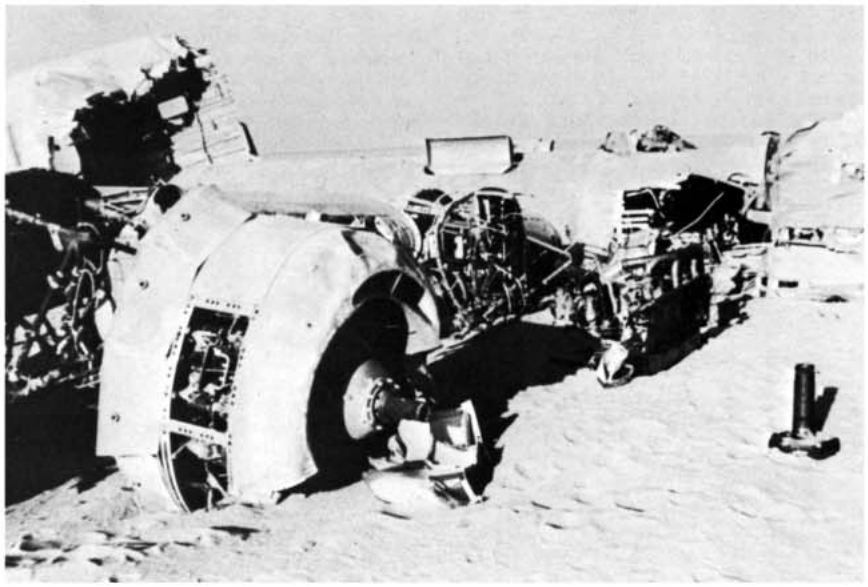
In 1968, the RAF Desert Rescue Team based at El Adem recovered the No. 2 engine for examination by the McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft Corporation. Upon stripping, they found a piece of 20mm cannon shell inside the rocker box on the No. 1 cylinder indicating that the *Lady Be Good* must have been attacked in the air during her one and only mission.

The Shell Oil Company carried out a series of tests on an oil sample from the engine and they established that there had been no appreciable deterioration in its constituents although the engine oil had all evaporated leaving a black sludge in the reservoir.

Following the first discovery of the *Lady Be Good,* the wreck was visited by numerous overland visitors and was used as a marker in the desert survival courses run by RAF parties from El Adem until that base too was forced to close in May 1970. A decade of souvenir hunters had taken its toll of the remaining airframe, even axes being used to chop off pieces. Suggestions of preserving the *Lady Be Good* for exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington came too late.

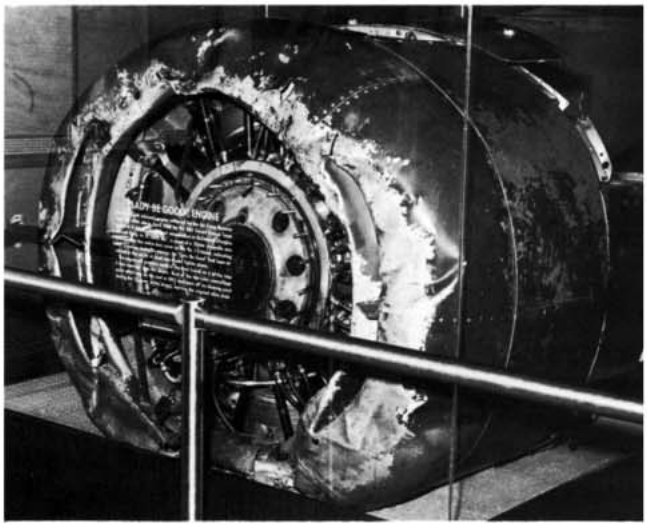
These pictures taken in 1968 are the most recent we could trace of the Lady Be Good and they clearly illustrate the deterioration of the wreck. No. 2 engine is now at the Wright-Patterson Museum but what happened to No. 3, seen being dismantled in the photographs below? The position of the wreck is now marked on official Libyan maps.





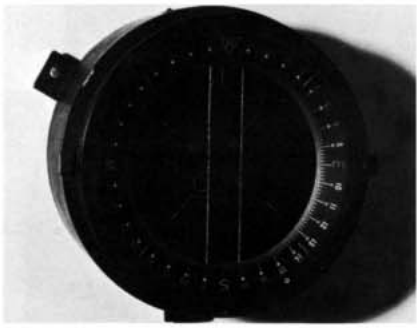
The march was not the longest across the desert as four members of the Long Range Desert Group had walked for ten days on two gallons of water in February 1941. When found, the New Zealander out front had covered 210 miles and was still going strong.

Had the crew of the *Lady Be Good* known it when they landed, supplies of food and water lay less than seventy miles to the east at the LRDG dump at Big Cairn. The epic march of the *Lady's* crew remains one of the most tragic stories of the Second World War.



The 'Lady' today at the USAF Museum. The No. 2 engine and hydraulic components removed for scientific and technical examination.

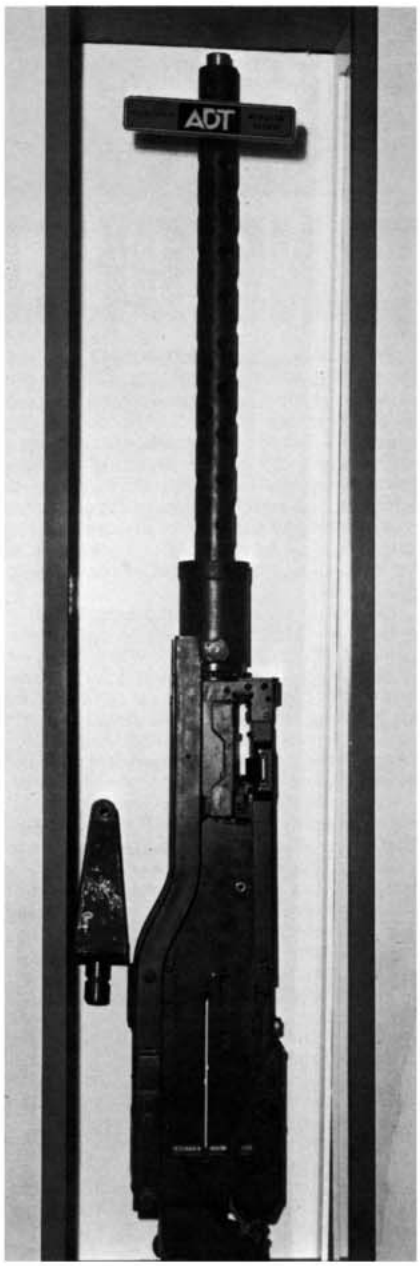
Nosewheel and Royal Airplane tyre.



D-12 compass removed by oil surveyor A. J. Martin, later donated to the museum.

The stained-glass window from the Wheelus chapel removed in 1970.

A small display is located at the Quartermaster Museum, Fort Lee, Virginia which includes Robert Toner's diary and wrist-watch, William Hattons' jacket and shirt and Dp Hays' flight suit and water bottle.



M-2 Browning machine gun donated by Major General H. R. Spicer, ex-CG US Seventeenth Air Force.

TANK DESTROYER RESTORATION

The M10 was introduced in 1942 with the specific roll of a tank destroyer — hence the name by which it is commonly known. Based on the Sherman M4A3 chassis, the sloping upper hull and open-top turret with its 3-inch M7 gun and .50 calibre Browning machine gun were specially designed for its intended role. The hull even had attachment points for fixing an additional layer of armour and the gun was a modified anti-aircraft weapon in the ground role (reminiscent of the German 88mm Flak).

Ownership of an M10 had long been the dream of Military Vehicle Conservation Group founder Peter Gray. When he came across one in a south-coast scrapyard, even though the owner was reluctant to sell, he set his heart on adding it to his already sizable military vehicle stable. Although destined for scrap, Peter's examination revealed that the basic tank and engine were still sound.

After two years' patient persuasion and much haggling, in May 1978 the scrapyard finally agreed to let Peter have the tank which was lying firmly hemmed in by other vehicles, scrap, bushes and trees. Several days work were necessary to clear a path to the outside world and clear away the undergrowth. Huge batteries were obtained from France and, when fitted, turned over and fired both 6-cylinder GM diesels on one starter as the other was found to have seized up. Later a beach recovery vehicle was hitched up to tow the tank destroyer out onto level ground. As Peter planned to unveil it at the Thruxton MVCG display, then only a few days away, he decided to get it running in situ. Later he brought up a portable generator to power a spray unit and to give it a blow over of olive drab.

Whilst the turret had easily been freed after unbolting it all round, the gun barrel had been cut short when the vehicle had been 'de-militarised' although the cut off piece was found beneath the tank when it was moved. However, for the show, Peter lashed up a drainpipe aligned on the barrel stub with an aluminium tube insert. The join was covered

Above: **Peter Gray in the driving compartment of the M10 surrounded by other tanks and undergrowth, trees and bushes where it had lain since the end of the war.** *Top:* **Tank destroyer in Cuba! Filming at Malaga, Spain — note the clever way the art department converted the word 'USA' to CUBA'.**

THE RECOVERY. Before the tank destroyer could be moved, another engineless M10 blocking it in had to be towed aside. *Top left:* **Ex-Eighth Army sergeant tank driver Roy Hazzard and Dave McDermott connect a steel wire hawser from the M10 hulk on the left, through a block and tackle anchored to a nearby Sexton to the back of a Beach Armoured Recovery Vehicle (BARV). During this operation, two anchor chains and one pulley block broke, the towing wire snapped and the Sexton moved instead!** *Above left:* **The engineless M10 has been towed out of the way to the left to allow Peter's TD to be extracted.** *Above right:* **The towing wire to the TD snaps, jamming around the track of the BARV.** *Below:* **Well clear, smoke pours from the TD as the twin GMC diesel engines turn over. They started because the clutches were seized in the engaged position (David Hucklebridge).**

The debut of the M10 at the MVCG D-Day rally at Thruxton Airfield. At this stage Peter Gray had spent less than two weeks on a hasty restoration job, the barrel being made from a plastic drainpipe (Dave Percy).

The Ardennes in June 1968 re-created in the gardens of Pinewood studios. The TD still retains the plastic barrel (R. Rushton).

by a simulated barrel muff. The repainted tank caused quite a stir when it burst forth on an unsuspecting audience at the Thruxton D-Day show.

The following month ABC Circle Films, engaged in making an American TV series *Eisenhower: The War Years* booked the M10 to appear in scenes of the Ardennes battle to be recreated in the Greater London Postal Services Club grounds at Ickenham, Middlesex. After the first scene, the film company replaced the drainpipe by welding back the original barrel.

Although the tank was laid up during the winter, a panic telephone call from the Linden Film Corporation in Spain brought it out from under its covers in February 1979 for its big-screen debut. The company were in the latter stages of filming *Cuba,* a picture about the Fidel Castro take over of the island starring Sean Connery (not in the title role!) and were on location at Malaga in southern Spain. Their need for the M10 was immediate to complete battle scenes in a conveniently-located sugar-cane plantation and Peter was asked if he could get the tank to the location within four days. Knowing that it could take weeks to obtain official documents for a wide-load vehicle with the necessary transit permits etc., Peter decided to bluff his way across France and into Spain. Entry through Dieppe at midnight caused few raised eyebrows as this is Peter's usual Channel port for the importation of ex-French Army vehicles. It was not until the DAF transporter reached Lyons that the French police pulled them over. Thereafter all movement was made under cover of darkness until they reached the frontier post at la Junquera. There the trouble really started! There was no way the authorities were going to permit the entry of a military load into Spain and naturally the permit from the film company had not arrived. Phone calls to Linden Films expedited a film company executive flying to the border post to try to sort out the problem. In the end, the tank was held up for three days before the right officials had been bought the customary expensive 'drinks'. After a further two-day drive (via Madrid as the more direct coast road was not suitable for the 40-ton load), the tank arrived at Malaga.

There followed ten days intensive filming almost all in pouring rain. Overnight the props department turned up some realistic dummy shells out of wood and electrically-detonated charges were made up to fit the end of the barrel. These consisted of naptha and barium nitrate in a plastic bottle which, when fired, produced a thunderous bang and sheet of flame.

The last sequence and the one Peter enjoyed doing the most was when he had to drive the

A later snow scene, filmed at the Post Office Social Club at Ickenham, now with the original barrel re-welded (Rodney Rushton).

Director of 'Cuba' Richard Lester (left) with Peter Gray (right) run over the action for a scene where Sean Connery mans the TD's gun. Note the dummy wooden rounds for the 3-inch gun.

tank straight at an army truck set up blocking the road. Although the intention was just to knock this into the ditch, the front of the M10 must have somehow caught in the bodywork and without any effort the van was squashed flat. This sequence was being filmed by two cameras, one being hand-held at the side of the road. The cameraman was being propped up on the edge of the ditch by his assistant behind. As the tank ploughed into the van, everyone dived for cover, the poor camera operator collapsing backwards into the ditch. Nevertheless, in true style, he kept filming all the time and the resulting sequence looks very impressive on the screen.

After an uneventful drive back to England, Customs officials at Newhaven had to add the crowning glory. Not only did they want to levy Customs Duty and Value Added Tax but proof had to be given that this was the same tank that had left the country a few days previously!

The last authentic detail needed to bring the M10 to its fully-restored condition was the addition of a .50-calibre Browning machine gun and the editor was able to put Peter in touch with Bill Gent of 137 Westborough Road, Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex, who is turning out very authentic looking .30 and .50-calibre Brownings and Bren Gun replicas. This arrived in time to be added for *Overlord II*, the second MVCG Rally to Normandy held in June 1979.

PHARMACIE
STELLA ARTOIS
PIZZA MILANO
Pizzeria Restaurant
PIZZA A EMPORTER
702 TD A-5